

M. K. G A N D H I
SELECT WRITINGS

By the same author

FACETS OF NEHRU

FACETS OF GANDHI

M.K. GANDHI : SELECT SPEECHES



M. K. GANDHI

SELECT WRITINGS

Edited by
B. K. AHLUWALIA

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TO MY PARENTS

PREFACE

Gandhiji's writings, like his life, are devoid of artificialities. His style is simple, precise and clear. He never used flowery and ornamental language which would hide the meaning. He had a knack for picking the most appropriate word to express his meaning. His utterance went straight to the heart of the reader.

In the words of M. Chalapathi Rau, "Gandhi was a natural writer in Gujarati but he has a place as a writer in the English language. There was not only character but strength of personality in whatever he wrote. To read him was to learn how to use words correctly, with scrupulous regard for their exact meanings. He scorned ornamentation and avoided rhetorical devices. Yet there was eloquence in all that he wrote, compelling clarity and persuasiveness. There was something Biblical in the solemn little sentences and those grave words which breathed and sang."

Though his writings breathe truth and morality, they are not mere sermons. He had the gift of expression and communication. There is grace in whatever he wrote. The reader often comes across memorable outbursts of lyrical feeling as in his controversy with Tagore. In his best moments he was a master of prose because he combined feeling with argument and matched his mood to the moment.

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Some of his editorials and articles had tremendous political influence and his journals had become very popular. In 1940, for example, *Harijan* was issued in a total of twelve editions in nine languages and in addition, Gandhiji's most important articles were reprinted the next day in all the newspapers of India. In his last years his own writings appeared less frequently ; in their place were summaries of his speeches and talks after prayers and descriptions of his activities.

The bulk of his writings are to be found in the various journals which he had edited—*Indian Opinion*, *Young India*, *Navajivan*, *Hindi Navajivan* and *Harijan*. Though today hundreds of books bear the authorship of Mahatma Gandhi, he himself wrote only a few books and pamphlets—*Satyagraha in South Africa*, *An Autobiography*, *Hind Swaraj* and *The Constructive Programme*. The material for other books has been culled by the editors from the various journals and papers. But unfortunately most of these books deal each with one particular topic only. For a full understanding of the Mahatma it is necessary that we should try to see him as a whole, read his views on all the questions with which he was called upon to deal and trace the evolution of his thought and the style of his leadership. There was need for such a book : a book which would be a record of his fads and fancies, his joys and sorrows, his ideas and ideals, his principles and penances—in short his concern for mankind. An attempt has been made in this selection to meet this need.

Since the writings have been arranged chronologically they bring out the evolution of the mind of the Mahatma and at the same time they present an authentic historical record of contemporary events and Gandhiji's own impact on those

events. Though the writings deal with various subjects, general or local, approached from various angles, practical or theoretical, they all reveal an earnest concern for mankind as a whole and for the destiny of man as man; a firm, unwavering faith in those spiritual and moral values which according to Gandhiji's precept and practice should govern both individual conduct and public life. The fruitful alliance between real religion and practical politics, the constant dialogue which he encouraged between the sacred and the secular spheres of life, this was Gandhiji's precious contribution to the process of human evolution, and this is well illustrated in passage after passage figuring in this anthology. The volume contains all those momentous and memorable utterances which have become classics already and which will be referred to and quoted by generations yet to come.

The general reader, for whom this anthology is intended will, I hope, enjoy the "timeless" quality in Gandhiji's writings, which were most timely and topical when they were written. Since Gandhiji needs no interpreter I have kept myself in the background, giving only the sources and, where needed, brief contextual footnotes. Where the date of the writing is different from the date of publication, the former date is given at the top of the article and the item is placed under that date.

I am extremely grateful to Mr. J. P. Uniyal who helped me at various stages during the production of this book. My special gratitude is also due to Professor K. Swaminathan, Chief Editor, Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, who found time to help and guide me. But for such help I would never have been able to present a volume like this.

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I am also grateful to my publisher, Mr. N. K. Sagar, for the pains he has taken to bring out the book expeditiously.

B. K. AHLUWALIA

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A BAND OF VEGETARIAN MISSIONARIES

It was in England that I read in Mrs. Anna Kingsford's *Perfect Way in Diet* that there was a colony of Trappists in South Africa who were vegetarians. Ever since that I had wished to see these vegetarians. The wish has at last been realized.

At the outset, I may remark that South Africa, and particularly Natal, is especially adapted for vegetarians. The Indians have made Natal the Garden Colony of South Africa. One can grow almost anything on the South African soil, and that in abundance. The supply of bananas, pineapples and oranges is almost inexhaustible, and far greater than the demand. There is no wonder that the vegetarians can thrive very well in Natal. The only wonder is that, in spite of such facilities and the warm climate, there should be so few vegetarians. The result is that large tracts of land still remain neglected and uncultivated. The staple articles of food are imported when it is perfectly possible to grow all of them in South Africa ; and in a vast territory like Natal, there is much distress among a small population of 40,000 whites. All this, because they will not take to agricultural pursuits.

Another curious but painful result of the unnatural mode of living is that there is a very strong prejudice against the Indian population who also number 40,000. The Indians, being vegetarians, take to agriculture without any difficulty whatsoever. Naturally, therefore, all over the Colony the

small farms are owned by Indians, whose keen competition gives offence to the white population. They are following a dog-in-the-manger and suicidal policy in so behaving. They would rather leave the vast agricultural resources in the country undeveloped than have the Indians to develop them. Owing to such stolidity and shortsightedness, a Colony that can easily support double, or even treble, the number of European and Indian inhabitants, with difficulty supports 80,000 Europeans and Indians. The Transvaal Government have gone so far in their prejudice that the whole of the Republic, although the soil is very fruitful, remains a desert of dust. And if the gold mines could not be worked from any cause, thousands of men would be thrown out of employment and literally starved to death. Is there not here a great lesson to be learnt ? The flesh-eating habits have really tended to retard the progress of the community, and, indirectly to create division among the two great communities which ought to be united and work hand in hand. There is also this striking fact to be noticed that the Indians enjoy as good a health as the Europeans in the Colony, and I know that many doctors would be simply starving if there were no Europeans, or their flesh-pots, and that by their thrifty and temperate habits, both attributable to vegetarianism, Indians can successfully compete with Europeans. Of course, it should be understood that the Indians in the Colony are not pure vegetarians. They are practically so.

We shall see presently how the Trappists of Mariann Hill, near Pinetown, are a standing testimony to the truth of the above remarks.

Pinetown is a little village, situated at a distance of 16 miles by rail from Durban. It is about 1,000 feet above the sea level and enjoys a beautiful climate.

The Trappist monastery is about three miles distant from Pinetown. My companion and I walked to Mariann Hill, as the hill, or rather the cluster of hills, on which the Abbey is situated, is called. It is a very pleasant walk through the little hills all covered with green grass.

On our reaching the settlement, we saw a gentleman with a pipe in his mouth, and we at once knew that he was not one of the brotherhood. He, however, took us to the visitors' room where a visitors' book was kept. It appeared from the book that it commenced from 1894, and there were hardly twenty pages filled up. Indeed, the mission is not at all known as it ought to be.

One of the brotherhood came up and bowed very low. We were offered tamarind water and pineapples. After having refreshed ourselves, we accompanied the guide to the various places he took us to. The various buildings one saw were all substantial red-brick buildings. All was quiet; the silence was broken only by the noise of the instruments in the workshops or the native children.

The settlement is a quiet little model village, owned on the truest republican principles. The principle of liberty, equality and fraternity is carried out in its entirety. Every man is a brother, every woman a sister. The monks number about 120 on the settlement, and the nuns, or the sisters as they are called, number about 60. The sisters' cloister is about half a mile from the brothers'. Both the brothers and the sisters observe a strict vow of silence and chastity. No brother or sister may speak except those who are allowed to by the Abbot, who is the head of the Trappists in Natal. And those are only allowed to speak who have to go to town to make purchases or to look after visitors.

The brothers are dressed in long robes with a black piece of cloth in front and on the back. The sisters wear red clothing of the simplest style. None seemed to wear socks.

A candidate for the brotherhood has to make a vow for two years and, till then, is called a novice. After two years, he may either leave the cloister or make a vow for life. A model Trappist gets up at 2 a. m. and devotes four hours to prayer and contemplation. At six, he has his breakfast, which consists of bread and coffee, or some such simple foods. He dines at twelve, and makes a meal of bread and soup, and fruits. He sups at six in the evening and goes to bed at 7 or 8 p.m. The brothers eat no fish, flesh or fowl. They discard even eggs. They take milk, but in Natal we were told they could not get it cheap. The sisters are allowed meat four days in the week. Asked why they put up with such an anomaly, the obliging guide said : "Because the sisters are more delicate than the brothers." Neither my companion, who is almost a vegetarian, nor I could see the force or logic of the reasoning. Certainly, both of us were very much grieved to hear the news which was a surprise to us, for we expected both the brothers and the sisters to be vegetarians.

They take no intoxicating liquors except under medical advice. None may keep money for private use. All are equally rich or poor.

We saw no wardrobes, chests of drawers, or portmantaus, although we were allowed to see every inch of the place. They may not leave the limits of the settlement, except those who are permitted to do so on business. They may not read newspapers and books that are not religious. They may not

read any religious books but only those that are allowed. It is this hard austere life that caused our friend with the pipe in his mouth, whom we first met, to remark in reply to a question whether he was a Trappist—"No fear, I am anything but a Trappist." And yet the good brothers and sisters did not seem to consider their lives to have fallen on hard places.

A Protestant clergyman said to his audience that the Roman Catholics are weakly, sickly and sad. Well, if the Trappists are any criterion of what a Catholic is, they are, on the contrary, healthy and cheerful. Wherever we went, a beaming smile and a lowly bow greeted us, whether we saw a brother or a sister. Even while the guide was descanting on the system he prized so much, he did not at all seem to consider the self-chosen discipline a hard yoke to bear. A better instance of undying faith and perfect, implicit obedience could not well be found anywhere else.

If their repast is the simplest possible, their dining tables and bedrooms are no less so.

The former are made on the settlement, of wood, without any varnish. They use no tablecloths. The knives and spoons are the cheapest to be had in Durban. Instead of glassware they use enamelled things.

For bedrooms they have a large hall (but none too large for the inmates) which contains about 80 beds. Every available space is utilized for the beds.

In the Native quarters they seem to have overdone it in point of beds. As soon as we entered the sleeping-hall for Natives, we noticed closeness and the stuffy air. The beds are

all joined together, separated by only single boards. There was hardly space enough to walk.

They believe in no colour distinctions. These Natives are accorded the same treatment as the whites. They are mostly children. They get the same food as the brothers, and are dressed as well as they themselves are. While it is generally said, not without some truth, that the Christian Kaffir is a failure, everyone, even the wildest sceptic, admits that the mission of the Trappists has proved the most successful in point of turning out really good, Christian Natives. While the mission schools of other denominations very often enable the Natives to contract all the terrible vices of the Western civilization, and very rarely produce any moral effect on them, the Natives of the Trappist mission are patterns of simplicity, virtue and gentleness. It was a treat to see them saluting passers-by in a humble yet dignified manner.

There are about 1,200 Natives on the mission, including children and adults. They have all exchanged a life of sloth, indolence and superstition for one of industry, usefulness and devotion to one Supreme God.

On the settlement there are various workshops—blacksmiths', tinsmiths', carpenters', shoemakers', tanners', etc., where the Natives are taught all these useful industries in addition to the English and the Zulu languages. Here it may be remarked that it speaks volumes for the highmindedness of the noble settlers that, although almost all of them are Germans, they never attempt to teach the Natives German ; all these Natives work side by side with the whites.

At the sisters' cloisters, they have the ironing, sewing, straw-hat manufacturing and knitting departments, where one can see the Native girls, dressed in clean costumes, working assiduously.

About two miles from the Abbey is situated the printing department, and the flour mill worked by a waterfall. It is a huge pile of building. There is also an oil machine, which is worked for pressing the oil from monkey-nuts. It is needless to mention that the above-mentioned workshops supply the settlers with most of their requirements.

They grow many kinds of tropical fruits on the farm and the settlement is almost self-supporting.

They love and respect, and are in turn loved and respected by, the Natives living in their neighbourhood who, as a rule, supply them with the converts.

The most prominent feature of the settlement is that you see religion everywhere. Every room has a Cross and, on the entrance, a small receptacle for holy water which every inmate reverently applies to his eyelids, the forehead and the chest. Even this quick walk to the flour mill is not without some reminder of the Cross. It is a lovely foot-path. On one side, you have a magnificent valley through which runs a small rivulet which murmurs the sweetest music and, on the other, little rocks whereon are carved the various inscriptions reminding you of the scenes of the Calvary. The valley is wholly covered with a green carpet of vegetation, studded with beautiful trees here and there. A lovelier walk or a lovelier scenery could not be well imagined. The inscriptions carved in such a place cannot fail to produce a grand effect upon the mind. They are carved at such regular intervals that no sooner has

one completed one's thoughts on one inscription than another meets one's gaze.

The walk thus forms a continuous exercise for calm contemplation, unmarred by any other thoughts, or outside noise and bustle. Some of the inscriptions are : "Jesus falls a first time" ; "Jesus falls a second time" ; "Simon carries the Cross" ; "Jesus is nailed to the Cross" ; "Jesus is laid in his mother's lap", etc., etc.

Of course, the Natives, too, are chiefly vegetarians. Although they are not prohibited from taking flesh or meat, they are not supplied with any on the settlement.

There are about twelve such settlements in South Africa, most of which are in Natal. There are in all about 300 monks and about 120 nuns.

Such are our vegetarians in Natal. Though they do not make of vegetarianism a creed, though they base it simply on the ground that a vegetarian diet helps them to crucify the flesh better and, though, perhaps, they are not even aware of the existence of the vegetarian societies, and would not even care to read any vegetarian literature, where is the vegetarian who would not be proud of this noble band, even a casual intercourse with whom fills one with a spirit of love, charity and self-sacrifice, and who are a living testimony to the triumph of vegetarianism from a spiritual point of view ? I know from personal experience that a visit to the farm is worth a voyage from London to Natal. It cannot but produce a lasting holy impression on the mind. No matter whether one is a Protestant, a Christian or a Buddhist or what not, one cannot help exclaiming, after a visit to the farm;

“If this is Roman Catholicism, everything said against it is a lie.” It proves conclusively, to my mind, that a religion appears divine or devilish, according as its professors choose to make it appear.

The Vegetarian, 18-5-1895

SECRET OF SATYAGRAHA

There appears to have been a good deal of misunderstanding following the Transvaal Indians' failure to comprehend the secret of satyagraha. It is therefore necessary to give a little more thought to satyagraha in the context of our victory against the obnoxious law. Those who know the real meaning of satyagraha should not have the slightest doubt as to what the victory means.

A satyagrahi enjoys a degree of freedom not possible for others, for he becomes a truly fearless person. Once his mind is rid of fear, he will never agree to be another's slave. Having achieved this state of mind, he will never submit to any arbitrary action.

Such satyagraha can be, ought to be, practised not only against a Government but against society as well, if need be. It can often happen that a society is as wrong as a Government. It becomes one's duty then to use satyagraha against society. The late Mr. Thoreau thought that his countrymen did wrong in carrying on slave-trade. He therefore ranged himself against his people. The great Luther defied his people single-handed and it is thanks to him that Germany enjoys freedom today. And there was Galileo who told them that they could kill him if they wanted to, but that it was nevertheless true that the earth revolved round the sun. Today, we all know that the earth is round and that it rotates round its axis once every 24 hours. Columbus acted like a true satyagrahi when facing his sailors. Exhausted by the long

voyage, they declared, "We will never get to America. Let us turn back, else we will kill you." Unperturbed, Columbus answered, "I am not afraid of being killed, but I think we ought to go on for a few days more." They did discover America, and Columbus won everlasting fame.

Such a wonderful remedy is this satyagraha. When we ask in fear what will happen if the Government does not repeal the Act, we only betray the deficiency of our satyagraha or talk as if we had been unmanned, having lost the weapon of satyagraha. But our satyagraha prompts us to become free and feel independent. We have therefore nothing to fear. "All this is idle talk. Whatever you do, you cannot start the campaign again. Once has been quite enough." There are persons who talk thus. If it is true that we cannot resume the struggle, it will have been in vain that we started it at all.

Let us justify this view of ours. It is a matter of common observation that what we have won can be retained only by the same means through which it was got. What is won by force can be retained by force alone. A tiger seizes its prey by force, and retains it through force. Those who are forcibly locked up in jail are kept there by force. The territories acquired by emperors by use of force are retained by force. In the same manner, what is gained by love can be retained only by love. The mother feels great love for the child in her womb and rears it with the same love afterwards. Its punishment while yet a child should not be interpreted as use of force. There are also instances where a mother has lost a child altogether because she stopped loving it for some reason. Similarly, what we have gained by satyagraha can be retained only through satyagraha. When satyagraha is given

up, we may be sure that the gains will also be lost. Moreover, it is unlikely that one will succeed in retaining through physical force what one gained by satyagraha. Suppose Indians wish to retain by force the fruits of victory won through satyagraha. Even a child can see that, if Indians resort to force, they can be crushed within the minute. Likewise, if we abandon satyagraha and go on as we did before, what we have gained may be lost.

These examples serve to show that satyagraha is really an attitude of mind. He who has attained to the satyagrahic state of mind will remain ever victorious, at all times and places and under all conditions irrespective of whether it is a government or a people that he opposes, whether they be strangers, friends or relatives.

It is only because we do not appreciate the marvel of satyagraha that we live in India as a poor and cowardly race, not only in our relations with the Government but in our personal relations as well. Certain customs which are palpably evil are kept alive in our country mainly because we lack in the spirit of satyagraha. Though well aware that certain customs are bad, we do very little to end them either because of fear, laziness or undue regard for others.

Before concluding, let me refer to the latest instance. When the whites held an anti-Indian meeting in Pretoria Town Hall, there were only four whites to speak in our favour. They were thus four against a thousand. But the four were brave enough to express their views in the face of a chorus of abuse from the crowd. In the event, their satyagraha considerably detracted from the importance of the meeting and turned it into a menagerie.

We urge every Indian to follow these ideas carefully. Those who do will learn the true nature of our success and find themselves equal to the tasks which the Indian community has to face.

Indian Opinion, 22-2-1908

MY REWARD

For my part, I am not in the least surprised that I was assaulted. I had declared even on the 9th that, in view of the promise about the repeal of the law, I did not see any dishonour in giving finger-impressions outside the law. On the contrary, I thought it was honourable to give them. When, in the meeting in front of the Mosque, there was strong opposition to the idea of Indians voluntarily giving their finger-impressions, I asked myself what I would do if I had the real spirit of satyagraha in me, and then I declared my resolution that, if I was alive on Monday, I would positively give my finger-impressions. I still do not regret having done so; rather, I think that I did my duty to my God and my community. When at a quarter to ten on Monday morning I set out towards the Registration Office in the company of Mr. Essop Mia, Mr. Naidoo and a few other Indians, I did feel that there might be an attack on me. In fact, I had spotted two of the assailants near the office. They walked alongside of us. I then became surer. But I decided that I should not, as I had declared earlier, mind being assaulted by my own brethren.

Some way ahead, one of the men asked, "Where are you all going?" Mr. Essop Mia was about to answer, when I interrupted saying, "I am going to the Registration Office to give my finger-impressions. The others, too, will do the same. If you want to give your thumb-impressions only, you can do that." My only recollection of what followed is that I received very severe blows.

I took severe blows on my left ribs. Even now I find breathing difficult. My upper lip has a cut on one side. I have a bruise above the left eye and a wound on the forehead. In addition, there are minor injuries on my right hand and left knee. I do not remember the manner of the assault, but people say that I fell down unconscious with the first blow which was delivered with a stick. Then my assailants struck me with an iron pipe and a stick, and they also kicked me. Thinking me dead, they stopped. I only remember having been beaten up. I have an impression that, as the blows started, I uttered the words '*He Rama*'. Mr. Thambi Naidoo and Mr. Essop Mia intervened. Mr. Naidoo was hit as a result and injured on the ear, Mr. Essop Mia received a slight injury on a finger. As I came to, I got up with a smile. In my mind there was not the slightest anger or hatred for the assailants.

On reflection, I feel that we fear death needlessly. I believe that I have not known such fear for a long time now. And I have grown more fearless after this incident. If I had not regained consciousness, I would not have felt the suffering that I went through later. We can thus see that there is suffering only as long as the soul is in intimate union with the body. I became aware of the suffering only when the soul's union with the body was restored.

NO ONE TO BLAME

I do not blame anyone for the assault. Those who attacked me would have at one time greeted me and welcomed me enthusiastically. When they assaulted me, it was in the belief that I had done them and the community harm. Some people thought I had sold the community by having agreed to the system of finger-impressions in our

compromise with the Government. If that is what they thought, is it surprising that they attacked me? If they had some education, they would, instead of assaulting me, have adopted other means of venting their dislike of me. In either case, they would have had the same reason. Experience tells me that some people know of only one way of expressing disapproval. For them physical strength is the one supreme thing. How then could I be angry? What point would there be in having them prosecuted? My real duty consists in disproving their charge against me. That will take time. Meanwhile, as is the way of the world, people will persist in the methods of violence. In this situation, the duty of the wise man is only to bear the suffering in patience. I think of myself as a wise person. I have therefore no choice but to endure the suffering inflicted on me. My religion teaches me to have no fear save of God. If I had any such fear, I should be violating a divine command. Why then should I be afraid of suffering? I therefore ask of God that I may remain fearless till the last. I ask my well-wishers to say the same prayer.

NURSING

When I came to somewhat, I was taken to Mr. Gibson's office, opposite which I had been attacked. I was attended to by Mr. Lew and Mr. Gibson Junior. A doctor washed the wounds. They were thinking of removing me to hospital. Mr. Doke, a clergyman, who did a great deal of work for us during the later stages of our campaign, hurried to the spot on hearing news of the assault; he suggested that I should be taken to his place. After some deliberation, I agreed to his suggestion. Mr. Doke is a Baptist and nearly forty-six years old. He has travelled widely in New Zealand, India, Wellestown and other countries. He came here from Grahamstown three months ago. Judging

from the way he looked after me and from his nature and that of his family, he must be a godly person indeed. He is not exactly a friend. I had met him barely three or four times before then, and that in connection with the campaign in order to explain the position to him. It was thus a stranger whom he took into his house. All the members of his family remained in constant attendance on me. His son's room was put at my disposal, and the son himself slept on the floor in the library. While I was ill, Mr. Doke would not allow the slightest noise anywhere in the house. Even the children moved about very quietly. Mr. Doke took the sanitary part of the duties on himself, while I looked helplessly on. The work of bandaging me, of washing the bandages, etc., was taken on by Mrs. Doke. They would not allow me to do even what I could have well done myself. Both husband and wife sat up at my bedside through the first night. They came into the room every now and again to see if I wanted anything. In the mornings Mr. Doke was busy receiving people who came to inquire after me. Every day nearly 50 Indians called. So long as he was in the house, he would take every Indian, whether he appeared clean or otherwise, into his drawing-room, offer him a seat and then bring him to me. He would also gently remind everyone that I should not be disturbed much. This is how he looked after me. He did more than attend on me and attend to all those who came to see me. He also did whatever he could about the difficulties of the community. Besides, he would call on Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Phillips and others, carry messages from me and do of his own accord whatever appeared necessary.

It is small wonder that a nation which produces such men should march forward. And how can one say that a religion to which such gentle, kind-hearted and really noble persons belong is false in any way? His only object in doing

all this was to please God. He also, as was his wont, prayed nightly sitting by my bed. In his daily life, too, he always said grace before and after a meal. His children were also made to take turns at reading from the Bible. I at any rate could see no selfish motive in him; in his conduct and in the education of the children, all that one could see was truth. I saw no touch of insincerity in anything that he did, neither did I feel that anything was done to please others. It is not often we come across such single-mindedness and nobility in Hindu or Muslim priests and *grihasthas*. These are not common even in Englishmen. Some nations have more of these qualities, others have less. Without entering into a discussion of that point, I would only pray that there might be hundreds of Indian families like Mr. Doke's.

TREATMENT

Both the blows and the injuries I received were severe, but in the opinion of the doctor not many patients were known to recover as speedily as I did. Though I was under the care of a physician, the treatment consisted entirely of home-cure methods. For the first two days I had nothing to eat or drink. That had the effect of keeping the fever down. On the third day I had no temperature. I started on a diet of a quarter pound of milk, and gradually added to it grapes, pears and other fruit. Then I began taking bread dunked in milk once a day. I am still on that diet. On account of an injury to three of the upper teeth, I shall not be able to eat anything hard for several days to come. Apart from the wounds, my mouth was swollen and so was my forehead. A poultice of clean earth was put on these, and the swelling has now subsided. I had been badly hit in the ribs, and here again the recovery is nearly complete thanks to a large poultice of earth. The doctor was afraid that the application

of earthen poultice on wounds might cause sepsis. But I had them put on my own responsibility. The doctor is now, however, convinced that the earthen poultice has done much good. Normally wounds which have to be stitched up rarely escape becoming septic. I am emphatically of the view that with an earthen poultice wounds heal without becoming septic. And that is what has happened. I have used many remedies involving the use of earth. I think, if earth is judiciously used, it can be a useful remedy in many ailments.

LESSON

My object in writing this account is not merely to tell a story or to fill the pages of this journal, but only that my experience may be of use to others. The lesson that every servant of India is to draw from the assault is that : if anyone wants to serve the community, and always do the right by it, he must be prepared for physical assaults. If we do not take these things to heart, we shall have more peace of mind and happiness and, to that extent, more strength to serve the community. Such assaults should really be looked upon as rewards. Mr. Doke's conduct shows us all the path of goodness and the home remedies described here are worth noting. Mr. Doke received nearly 40 telegrams of thanks from different parts of the Colony and some Indians sent him fruits and other gifts as a mark of their gratitude.

WHO CAN OFFER SATYAGRAHA ?

The satyagraha campaign in the Transvaal has lasted so long and has been so conducted that we have been able to see—learn—a great many things from it. Many have had personal experience of it. This much at least has been realized by everyone—that, in a struggle of this kind, there is no room for defeat. If, on any occasion, we fail we shall discover that the failure was due to some deficiency in the satyagrahi and did not argue the inefficacy of satyagraha as such. The point needs to be carefully grasped. No such rule can be applied to physical fighting. When two armies engage in such fighting defeat of either will not necessarily be the result of the inferior fighting quality of the troops. The combatants may have a high morale, and yet, insufficiency in other matters may lead to defeat. For instance, one side may have better arms than the other, or may be favourably placed in the battle-field, or may command superior technical skill. There are many such extraneous factors which account for the victory or defeat of the parties to a physical fight. But such factors offer no difficulties to those fighting the battle of satyagraha. Their deficiency alone can come in their way. Moreover, in the usual kind of fighting, all the members of the losing side should be deemed to have been defeated, and in fact they do think that way. In satyagraha, the victory of a single member may be taken to mean the victory of all, but the defeat of the side as a whole does not spell defeat for the person who has not himself yielded. For instance, in the Transvaal fight, even if a majority of Indians were to submit to the obnoxious Act, he who remains unyielding will be victorious indeed, for

the fact remains that he has not yielded.

That being so, it is necessary to inquire as to who can offer so admirable a battle—one which admits of no defeat—which can have only one result. The inquiry will enable us to understand some of the results of the Transvaal campaign, and to decide how and by whom a campaign of this kind can be fought elsewhere or on some other occasion.

If we inquire into the meaning of satyagraha, we find that the first condition is that anyone who wants to engage in this kind of fighting should show a special regard for truth—should have the strength that flows from truthfulness. That is to say, such a man should depend on truth alone. One cannot have the best of both worlds ! A man who attempts to have it so will be crushed under pressure of both kinds. Satyagraha is not a carrot, to be played on as a pipe. Anyone who thinks that it is, so that he may play on it if he can or bite it off if he cannot, will find himself lost in the end. It is absurd to suggest that satyagraha is being resorted to only by those who are deficient in physical strength or who, finding physical strength unavailing, can think of no alternative but satyagraha. Those who hold such a view, it may be said, do not know what this fight means. Satyagraha is more potent than physical strength, which is as worthless as straw when compared with the former. Essentially, physical strength means that a man of such strength fights on the battle-field with little regard for his body, that is to say, he knows no fear. A satyagrahi, on his part, gives no thought whatever to his body. Fear cannot touch him at all. That is why he does not arm himself with any material weapons, but continues resistance till the end without fear of death. This means that the satyagrahi should have more courage than the man who relies on physical strength. Thus, the first

thing necessary for a satyagrahi is pursuit of truth, faith in truth.

He must be indifferent to wealth. Wealth and truth have always been in conflict with each other, and will remain so till the end of time. We have found from many examples of Indians in the Transvaal that he who clings to wealth cannot be loyal to truth. This does not mean that a satyagrahi can have no wealth. He can, but he cannot make his wealth his God. Money is welcome if one can have it consistently with one's pursuit of truth ; otherwise one must not hesitate even for a moment to sacrifice it as if it were no more than dirt on one's hand. No one who has not cultivated such an attitude can practise satyagraha. Moreover, in a land where one is obliged to offer satyagraha against the rulers, it is not likely that the satyagrahi will be able to own wealth. The power of a king may be unavailing against an individual. But it can touch his property, or play on his fear of losing it. The king bends the subject to his will by threatening them with loss of property or physical harm. Therefore, under the rule of a tyrannical king, for the most part, it is only those who make themselves accomplices in his tyranny that can retain or amass wealth. Since a satyagrahi cannot allow himself to be an accomplice in tyranny, he must, in such circumstances, be content to think himself rich in his poverty. If he owns any wealth, he must hold it in some other country.

A satyagrahi is obliged to break away from family attachments. This is very difficult to do. But the practice of satyagraha, if satyagraha is to be worthy of its name, is like walking on the edge of a sword. In the long run, even the breaking away from family attachments will prove beneficial to the family. For the members of the family will come to feel the call for satyagraha, and those who have felt such a

call will have no other desire left. When faced with suffering of any kind—loss of wealth or imprisonment—one need not be concerned about the future of one's family. He who has given us teeth will provide us with food to eat. If he provides for such dangerous creatures as the snake, the scorpion, the tiger and the wolf, He is not likely to be unmindful of mankind. It is not a pound of millets or a handful of corn that we hanker after, but the delights of the palate ; not just the clothes that we need to enable us to bear cold, but garments of brocaded silk. If we abandon all this restless craving, there will hardly be any need for anxiety as to the means for maintaining one's family.

In this connection, it is worth while to bear in mind that many of these things have to be sacrificed even if physical force is resorted to. One is obliged to suffer hunger and thirst, to bear heat and cold, to sacrifice family bonds, to put up with pecuniary loss. The Boers went through all this when they resorted to physical force. The one great difference between the physical resistance that they offered and our resistance based on truth is that the game they played was in the nature of a gamble. Physical strength, moreover has made them proud. Their partial success made them forgetful of their former condition. Having fought with deadly arms against a deadly enemy, they are bearing hard upon us as deadly tyrants. When a satyagrahi wins in battle, his success cannot but be beneficial to him and to others. A satyagrahi, if he is to remain loyal to truth, can never be a tyrant.

This inquiry, then, leads at last to the conclusion that he alone can offer satyagraha who has true faith in religion. "The name of Rama on the lips, and a dagger under the arm"—that is no faith. It is no religion to speak in its name and to do exactly the opposite of what it teaches. But anyone who has

true religion and faith in him can offer satyagraha. In other words, he who leaves everything to God can never know defeat in this world. Such men are not defeated in fact simply because people say that they are defeated. So also one cannot claim success simply because people believe that one has succeeded. There can be no arguing about this ; if you know the difference, you know it, else you don't.

This is the real nature of satyagraha. The Transvaal Indians have partially understood it. Having done so, they have been faithful to it in practice, again partially. Even so, we have been able to taste its priceless sweetness. He who has sacrificed everything for satyagraha has gained everything, for he lives in contentment. Contentment is happiness. Who has ever known any happiness other than this ? Every other kind of happiness is but a mirage. The nearer we approach it, the farther it recedes.

We hope that every Indian will think of the matter this way and make himself a satyagrahi. If we learn the use of the weapon of satyagraha, we can employ it to overcome all hardships originating from injustice. It is not in South Africa alone that the weapon is useful ; it will be more so in our home country. Only we must know its true nature, which is easy to do, and yet difficult. Men of great physical strength are rare. Rarer still must be those who derive their strength from truth.

WHAT IS TRUE CIVILIZATION ?

READER : You have denounced railways, lawyers, and doctors. I can see that you will discard all machinery. What, then, is civilization?

EDITOR : The answer to that question is not difficult. I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world. Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestors. Rome went, Greece shared the same fate; the might of the Pharaohs was broken; Japan has become Westernized; of China nothing can be said; but India is still, somehow or other, sound at the foundation. The people of Europe learn their lessons from the writings of the men of Greece or Rome, which exist no longer in their former glory. In trying to learn from them, the Europeans imagine that they will avoid the mistakes of Greece and Rome. Such is their pitiable condition. In the midst of all this India remains immovable and that is her glory. It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilized, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes. It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change. Many thrust their advice upon India, and she remains steady. This is her beauty; it is the sheet-anchor of our hope.

Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to

attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means "good conduct".

If this definition be correct, then India, as so many writers have shown, has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is as it should be. We notice that the mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences. They saw that happiness was largely a mental condition. A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy, the poor to be happy. Millions will always remain poor. Observing all this, our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures. We have managed with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of years ago. We have retained the same kind of cottages that we had in former times and our indigenous education remains the same as before. We have had no system of life-corroding competition. Each followed his own occupation or trade and charged a regulation wage. It was not that we did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. They, therefore, after due deliberation decided that we should only do what we could with our hands and feet. They saw that our real happiness and health consisted in a proper use of our hands and feet. They further reasoned that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance and that people would not be happy in them, that there would be gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing in them and that poor men would be robbed by rich men. They were, therefore, satisfied with small villages. They saw that kings and their swords were inferior

to the sword of ethics, and they, therefore, held the sovereigns of the earth to be inferior to the Rishis and the Fakirs. A nation with a constitution like this is fitter to teach others than to learn from others. This nation had courts, lawyers and doctors, but they were all within bounds. Everybody knew that these professions were not particularly superior; moreover, these vakils and vairs did not rob people; they were considered people's dependants, not their masters. Justice was tolerably fair. The ordinary rule was to avoid courts. There were no touts to lure people into them. This evil, too, was noticeable only in and around capitals. The common people lived independently and followed their agricultural occupation. They enjoyed true Home Rule.

And where this cursed modern civilization has not reached, India remains as it was before. The inhabitants of that part of India will very properly laugh at your new-fangled notions. The English do not rule over them, nor will you ever rule over them. Those in whose name we speak we do not know, nor do they know us. I would certainly advise you and those like you who love the motherland to go into the interior that has yet been not polluted by the railways and to live there for six months; you might then be patriotic and speak of Home Rule.

Now you see what I consider to be real civilization. Those who want to change conditions such as I have described are enemies of the country and are sinners.

READER : It would be all right if India were exactly as you have described it, but it is also India where there are hundreds of child widows, where two year old babies are married, where twelve year old girls are mothers and housewives, where women practise polyandry, where the practice

of *niyoga* obtains, where, in the name of religion, sheep and goats are killed. Do you consider these also symbols of the civilization that you have described?

EDITOR : You make a mistake. The defects that you have shown are defects. Nobody mistakes them for ancient civilization. They remain in spite of it. Attempts have always been made and will be made to remove them. We may utilize the new spirit that is born in us for purging ourselves of these evils. But what I have described to you as emblems of modern civilization are accepted as such by its votaries. The Indian civilization, as described by me, has been so described by its votaries. In no part of the world, and under no civilization, have all men attained perfection. The tendency of the Indian civilization is to elevate the moral being, that of the Western civilization is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless, the former is based on a belief in God. So understanding and so believing, it behoves every lover of India to cling to the old Indian civilization even as a child clings to the mother's breast.

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

*After July 11, 1914**

The term passive resistance does not fit the activity of the Indian community during the past eight years. Its equivalent in the vernacular rendered into English means truth force. I think Tolstoy called it also soul-force or love force. And so it is. Carried out to its utmost limit, this force is independent of pecuniary or other material assistance; certainly, even in its elementary form, of physical force or violence. Indeed, violence is the negation of this great spiritual force which can only be cultivated or wielded by those who will entirely eschew violence. It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by men, women and children. It is totally untrue to say that it is a force to be used only by the weak so long as they are not capable of meeting violence by violence. This superstition arises from the incompleteness of the English expression. It is impossible for those who consider themselves to be weak to apply this force. Only those who realize that there is something in man which is superior to the brute nature in him, and that the latter always yields to it, can effectively be passive resisters. This force is to violence and therefore to all tyranny, all injustice, what light is to darkness. In politics,

*Gandhiji left Phoenix on July 11, 1914 and wrote this article en route to India.

its use is based upon the immutable maxim that government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed. We did not want to be governed by the Asiatic Act of 1907 of the Transvaal and it had to go before this mighty force. Two courses were open to us—to use violence when we were called upon to submit to the Act, or to suffer the penalties prescribed under the Act, and thus to draw out and exhibit the force of the soul within us for a period long enough to appeal to the sympathetic chord in the governors or the law-makers. We have taken long to achieve what we set about striving for. That was because our passive resistance was not of the most complete type. All passive resisters do not understand the full value of the force, nor have we men who always from conviction refrain from violence. The use of this force requires the adoption of poverty, in the sense that we must be indifferent whether we have the wherewithal to feed or clothe ourselves. During the past struggle, all passive resisters, if any at all, were not prepared to go that length. Some again were only passive resisters, so-called. They came without any conviction, often with mixed motives, less often with impure motives. Some even, whilst engaged in the struggle, would gladly have resorted to violence but for most vigilant supervision. Thus it was that the struggle became prolonged ; for the exercise of the purest soul-force in its perfect form brings about instantaneous relief. For this exercise, prolonged training of the individual soul is an absolute necessity so that a perfect passive resister has to be almost, if not entirely, a perfect man. We cannot all suddenly become such men, but if my proposition is correct—as I know it to be correct—the greater the spirit of passive resistance in us, the better men we will become. Its use therefore is, I think, indisputable and it is a force which, if it became universal, would revolutionize social ideals and do away with despotism and the ever-

growing militarism under which the nations of the West are groaning and are being almost crushed to death—the militarism which promises to overwhelm even the nations of the East. If the past struggle has produced even a few Indians who would dedicate themselves to the task of becoming passive resisters as nearly perfect as possible, they would not only have served themselves in the truest sense of the term, they would also have served humanity at large. Thus viewed, passive resistance is the noblest and the best education. It should come, not after the ordinary education in letters of children, but it should precede it. It will not be denied that a child, before it begins to write its alphabet and to gain worldly knowledge, should know what the soul is, what truth is, what love is, what powers are latent in the soul. It should be an essential of real education that a child should learn that, in the struggle of life, it can easily conquer hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by self-suffering. It was because I felt the forces of this truth that, during the later part of the struggle, I endeavoured as much as I could to train the children at Tolstoy Farm and then at Phoenix along these lines, and one of the reasons for my departure to India is still further to realize, as I already do in part, my own imperfection as a passive resister and then to try to perfect myself, for I believe that it is in India that the nearest approach to perfection is most possible.

MESSAGE TO INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

July 15, 1914

On the eve of my departure from South Africa, I should like to leave a brief message in writing.

There has been no limit to the love I have received from the Indians in this country. I am sure those who have given such love will always prosper. I hear it said that our community is ungrateful. My heart tells me that this is said in ignorance and impatience. Were the Indian people really so, I would have felt no pride in being called a son of India, nor could I recite with utter sincerity the sublime poem, *India, a refuge of all those that suffer*.

Though I have had more than human love from Indians, I also know that there are some of them who believe themselves, and are taken by others, to be my enemies. For me, however, they are no enemies. Those who speak ill of us sometimes prove to be our true friends. I do not consider at the moment whether this is so in my case or not. I only want to show that I am not free from responsibility for their speaking ill of me. If I had perfect love for them, they would never have bitter things to say against me. Such love, however, is hardly possible for men. Whilst I lack it, I shall bear their hostility; I shall not regard them as my enemies.

There are easy and effective measures which will enable

Indians to live in peace in this country. All religious antagonism, as that one is a Hindu or a Muslim, a Christian or a Parsi, should be forgotten. Let there be no provincial distinctions such as Bengalis, Madrasis, Gujaratis, Punjabis, etc. All ideas of high and low which divide men into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras should be abandoned. Indians are all subject to the same laws; if so, how can we fight them disunited?

We needs must observe truth. I know it is futile to expect, in this land, that everyone will be perfectly truthful; it should, however, be possible for us to adhere to truth, by and large. Otherwise, Indians cannot live on here as Indians, or human beings.

Whenever there are hardships, they will have to be fought courageously. Should Indians refuse to fight them, blinded by self-interest or because of weakness, they will assuredly be overwhelmed by disaster.

If the leaders are selfish, greedy, lazy, given to lying and licentious, the common people will make no progress. And so, should the latter remain backward, the responsibility will be that of the leaders and theirs, too, will be the guilt.

Indians from Bombay are often rude to those hailing from Calcutta and Madras and indifferent to their feelings. The term *colcha* has still not gone out of use in our language. Such ways are fraught with danger and, if not abandoned, will assuredly bring the community to grief. The people from Bombay know very well that their compatriots from Calcutta and Madras are far more numerous than they. Even from the point of view of self-interest, therefore, it is necessary

that we show them due regard.

Even good Indians show contempt for Colonial-born Indians. I have believed and still believe that they are wrong in doing so. Colonial-born Indians do have some defects; but, then, who has not ? They have also many fine qualities. It is worth noting that, if the satyagraha campaign has been a glorious performance, it was because of the sacrifices of Indians born in this country. Large numbers of such Indians, and many women too, have gone to jail. To help forward any Colonial-born Indians, either educated or uneducated, will be an act of piety on the part of the community meriting a reward, and I am sure it will be duly rewarded, for such has been my experience.

We are very dirty and some of us behave so abjectly, because of greed, that the whites feel disgusted, as they well might. If the leaders exert themselves, they can end all the filthiness that we notice around us. That there should be too many people sleeping in small rooms, that these should hold stores of foodgrains, fruit, etc., and never be washed, that lavatories should be kept unclean, that bedsteads should never be aired in the sun, that the windows should never be opened, that the place should never be dusted, that sleeping, cooking, bathing, relaxing, should all be done in one and the same room—this is pathetic indeed. This way we turn ourselves into denizens of hell in this very world. This state of affairs must change.

Gold-smuggling by members of the community is on the increase. Some Indians want to get rich quick. They will get into trouble and disgrace the name of the community as a whole. I wish they would rein themselves in.

As some Tamils and Calcuttamen have become slaves to the wicked habit of drink, so have some Gujaratis too. The Indian who weans them from this will be a man of noble soul indeed. Indian businessmen can exercise a good influence, if they mean to, over these helpless brethren whose state is so pitiable.

As I understand it, the Settlement which has taken place is a charter of our freedom. We could not have accepted less than what it gives. More it is not possible to secure at present. It is my emphatic advice, therefore, that every effort should be made to preserve what has been obtained and to resist the Government if it seeks to take away anything from it. If it places upon the terms of the Settlement a construction different from ours, or mine, or if a court does so and the Government then refuses to make any modifications, there will be cause for friction and the Government will again invite the charge of breach of promise.

The main difficulty for the present will be regarding the Dealers' Licenses Act. Even in this matter, however, redress will be easier wherever things are under the jurisdiction of the Union Government. Where, on the other hand, licences are granted by the municipalities, things will be very difficult. The remedy for this is to put up a fight whenever licences are taken away, apply to courts and petition the Government, hold meetings and pass resolutions. If, at the end of all this, there should be no redress, there will be nothing for it but to resort to satyagraha. This is easy to offer in the matter of licences. If only the hawkers show courage, the struggle for licences could be won. It is possible that traders will have to suffer for some time. I hope they will not fail to do their duty at the critical moment. We must demand complete

freedom to trade, and ought to get it. Everything depends on the traders.

The Gold Law in the Transvaal is a very oppressive measure. The settlement secures to all the right to carry on business wherever they are doing so at present. People can shift their business from one place to another in the same town, but they cannot go over to another town. So much can be taken as included in the clause on "existing rights". If the Government permits less than this, that will be a breach of the terms of the Settlement. To secure more than this, independent efforts will be necessary, and I don't think these can be made at present. Great care will have to be exercised to see that they do not keep us in the dark and pass complicated laws on these and related subjects. In regard to the Gold Law also, it should be easy to offer satyagraha against it, if it is administered with excessive severity.

As regards the Transvaal Law of 1885, I don't see any possibility of our being able to touch it at present.

On the issue of marriages, it is not possible to secure anything more for the present. To waste efforts on that will interfere with other important tasks. There is no other better law elsewhere than the one which has been enacted.

We need not fight for votes or for freedom of entry for fresh immigrants from India. I think we shall have to rest content at present with the removal of the taint of racial discrimination from the law.

However, if the Indian community is strong and itself enterprising, if it maintains unity, truthfulness and courage, the

following expectations may be realized in 15 years :

1. Complete freedom of trade.
2. Full rights of ownership of land in all Provinces and
3. Freedom of movement from one Province to another.

In order to bring all this about, it will be necessary to have the Licensing Acts, the Gold Laws, the Township Act, Law 3 of 1885 and the Immigration Act amended for which purpose public opinion will have to be cultivated among the whites of South Africa. This is not difficult to do.

The community need not be anxious on account of the indentured labourers. There is nothing in the new law which can be interpreted to mean that the Government may send them away.

I appeal to all Indians to help Mr. Polak and seek his help. No one is as well informed about our question as he. He has regard for the community, is honest, has ability and is full of enthusiasm. It is my earnest request to Indians in all Provinces that they utilize Mr. Polak's services and follow his advice. Others will not be able to draft petitions as well as he can. He will not accept money for any public work, which means that he will remain in South Africa only if he can pay his way by his professional work; otherwise, he will leave for England. I know that he still does not earn enough to meet his need and, therefore, I earnestly appeal to the Transvaal Indians to entrust their legal affairs to Mr. Polak.

Indian Opinion is run only for the service of the community. So is Phoenix. Those who have settled there have not done so with the intention of making money. They draw only as much as they need for a simple and plain life. It will be so much of a loss to the community if it does not utilize the services of those who are working in this spirit. Mr. Omar Hajee Jhaveri and Parsee Rustomjee are now the owners of the Phoenix lands and its managing trustees in South Africa. The community can get all information about Phoenix through them or even directly. I request every Indian to understand the objects of Phoenix. I cannot help saying that it is a great field for anyone aspiring to serve India. This, some may indeed feel, is rather improper of me to say in view of my close association with Phoenix; it is, however, my sincere belief.

Though I am leaving for the motherland, I am not likely to forget South Africa. I should like friends who may have occasion to go to India to come and see me there. I do intend, of course, to work in India in regard to the disabilities here. And I shall be able to work better if the people in South Africa ask for my service. I think the expenses to be incurred in India on this work by way of stationery, postage, printing, etc., should be met from here. The money I have been given I propose to use only for this purpose.

Above all, I wish to say that it is up to the community to win its freedom and that its ultimate weapon, an irresistible one, is satyagraha.

If I have harmed any Indian, knowingly or unknowingly, if I have been the cause of pain to anyone, I crave God's forgiveness and theirs.

I am, of course, a satyagrahi and I hope always to remain one, but in December last I fell more under the spell of indenture. Since the term *girmitio* ("indentured labourer") is already in use about me in Gujarati.

The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII

AHIMSA

There seems to be no historical warrant for the belief that an exaggerated practice of ahimsa synchronized with our becoming bereft of manly virtues. During the past 1,500 years we have, as a nation, given ample proof of physical courage, but we have been torn by internal dissensions and have been dominated by love of self instead of love of country. We have, that is to say, been swayed by the spirit of irreligion rather than of religion.

I do not know how far the charge of unmanliness can be made good against the Jains. I hold no brief for them. By birth I am a Vaishnavite and was taught ahimsa in my childhood. I have derived much religious benefit from Jain religious works as I have from scriptures of the other great faiths of the world. I owe much to the living company of the deceased philosopher, Raja Chand Kavi, who was a Jain by birth. Thus though my views on ahimsa are a result of my study of most of the faiths of the world, they are now no longer dependent upon the authority of these works. They are a part of my life, and if I suddenly discovered that the religious books read by me bore a different interpretation from the one I had learnt to give them, I should still hold to the view of ahimsa as I am about to set forth here.

Our Shastras seem to teach that a man who really practises ahimsa in its fulness has the world at his feet; he so affects his surroundings that even the snakes and other venomous reptiles do him no harm. This is said to have been

the experience of St. Francis of Assisi.

In its negative form, it means not injuring any living being, whether by body or mind. It may not, therefore, hurt the person of any wrongdoer or bear any ill-will to him and so cause him mental suffering. This statement does not cover suffering caused to the wrongdoer by natural acts of mine which do not proceed from ill-will. It, therefore, does not prevent me from withdrawing from his presence a child whom he, we shall imagine, is about to strike. Indeed, the proper practice of ahimsa requires me to withdraw the intended victim from the wrongdoer, if I am in any way whatsoever the guardian of such a child. It was therefore most proper for the passive resisters of South Africa to have resisted the evil that the Union Government sought to do to them. They bore no ill-will to it. They showed this by helping the Government whenever it needed their help. "Their resistance consisted of disobedience of the orders of the Government even to the extent of suffering death at their hands." Ahimsa requires deliberate self-suffering, not a deliberate injuring of the supposed wrongdoer.

In its positive form, ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of ahimsa, I must love my enemy. I must apply the same rules to the wrongdoer who is my enemy or a stranger to me as I would to my wrong-doing father or son. This active ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness. As man cannot deceive the loved one, he does not fear or frighten him or her. Gift of life is the greatest of all gifts; a man who gives it in reality disarms all hostility. He has paved the way for an honourable understanding. And none who is himself subject to fear can bestow that gift. He must therefore be himself fearless. A man cannot then practise ahimsa and be a coward at the same

time. The practice of ahimsa calls forth the greatest courage. It is the most soldierly of a soldier's virtues. General Gordon has been represented in a famous statue as bearing only a stick. This takes us far on the road to ahimsa. But a soldier who needs the protection of even a stick, is to that extent so much the less a soldier. He is the true soldier who knows how to die and stand his ground in the midst of a hail of bullets. Such a one was Ambarish, who stood his ground without lifting a finger though Durvasa did his worst. The Moors who were being pounded by the French gunners and who rushed to the guns' mouths with "Allah" on their lips, showed much the same type of courage. Only theirs was the courage of desperation. Ambarish's was due to love. Yet the Moorish valour, readiness to die conquered the gunners. They frantically waved their hats, ceased firing, and greeted their erstwhile enemies as comrades. And so the South African passive resisters in their thousands were ready to die rather than sell their honour for a little personal ease. This was ahimsa in its active form. It never barter away honour. A helpless girl in the hands of a follower of ahimsa finds better and surer protection than in the hands of one who is prepared to defend her only to the point to which his weapons would carry him. The tyrant, in the first instance, will have to walk to his victim over the dead body of her defender; in the second he has but to overpower the defender; for it is assumed that the canon of propriety in the second instance will be satisfied when the defender has fought to the extent of his physical valour. In the first instance, as the defender has matched his very soul against the mere body of the tyrant, the odds are that the soul in the latter will be awakened and the girl would stand an infinitely greater chance of her honour being protected than in any other conceivable circumstance, barring of course that of her own personal courage.

If we are unmanly today, we are so, not because we do not know how to strike but because we fear to die. He is no follower of Mahavira, the apostle of Jainism, or of Buddha or of the Vedas who, being afraid to die, takes flight before any danger, real or imaginary, all the while wishing that somebody else would remove the danger by destroying the person causing it. He is no follower of ahimsa who does not care a straw if he kills a man by inches by deceiving him in trade, or who would protect by force of arms a few cows and make away with the butcher or who, in order to do a supposed good to his country, does not mind killing off a few officials. All these are actuated by hatred, cowardice and fear. Here the love of the cow or the country is a vague thing intended to satisfy one's vanity or soothe a stinging conscience.

Ahimsa, truly understood, is in my humble opinion a panacea for all evils mundane and extra-mundane. We can never overdo it. Just at present we are not doing it at all. Ahimsa does not displace the practice of other virtues, but renders their practice imperatively necessary before it can be practised even in its rudiments. Mahavira and Buddha were soldiers, and so was Tolstoy. Only they saw deeper and truer into their profession and found the secret of a true, happy, honourable and godly life. Let us be joint sharers with these teachers, and this land of ours will once more be the abode of gods.

GOKHALE : MY POLITICAL GURU

February 19, 1918

What could a disciple, however, write about his master ? How could he write it ? It would be presumptuous for a disciple to do so. The true disciple merges himself in the guru and so can never be a critic of the guru. *Bhakti* or devotion has no eye for shortcomings. There can be no cause for complaint if the public do not accept the eulogies of one who refuses to analyse the merits and shortcomings of his subject. The disciple's own actions are, in fact, his commentary on the master. I have often said that Gokhale was my political Guru. That is why I consider myself incapable of writing about him. Whatever I write would seem imperfect in my eyes. I believe the relationship between the master and the disciple is purely spiritual. It is not based on arithmetical calculations. The relationship is formed on the instant, spontaneously, as it were, and never snaps once it is formed.

This relationship of ours was formed in the year 1896. I had no idea of its nature then : nor had he. About the same time, I had the good fortune to wait on the master's master (Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade), Lokamanya Tilak, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Justice Badruddin Tyabji, Dr. Bhandarkar as also the leaders of Madras and Bengal. I was but a raw youth. Everyone of them showered his love on me. These were among the occasions which I can never forget while I live. But the peace of mind which my contacts with Gokhale gave me, those with others did not. I do not remem-

ber that any special affection was shown to me by Gokhale. If I were to measure and compare the love I experienced from them all, I have an impression that no one else showed such love to me as Dr. Bhandarkar did. He told me : "I do not take any part in public affairs now. But, for your sake I will preside over the public meeting on the issue which you have at heart." Still, it was only Gokhale who bound me to himself. Our new relationship did not take shape immediately. But in 1902, when I attended the Calcutta Congress, I became fully aware of my being in the position of a disciple. Now, again, I had the privilege of meeting almost all the leaders mentioned above. I saw that Gokhale had not only not forgotten me but had actually taken me under his charge. This had its tangible results. He dragged me to his quarters. During the Subjects Committee meeting, I felt helpless. While the various resolutions were under discussion, I could not, right till the end, gather enough courage to declare that I too had a resolution in my pocket on South Africa. It was not to be expected that the night would halt for my sake. The leaders were impatient to finish the business on hand. I was trembling with the fear that they would rise to leave any moment. I could not summon up courage to remind even Gokhale of my business. Just then he cried out, "Gandhi has a resolution on South Africa ; we must take it up." My joy knew no bounds. This was my first experience of the Congress and I put great store by resolutions passed by it. There is no counting the occasions of our meetings that followed, and they are all sacred to me. For the present, however, I think I would do well to state what I have believed to be the guiding principle of his life.

In these difficult and degenerate times, the pure spirit of religion is hardly in evidence anywhere. Men who go about the world calling themselves *rishis*, *munis* and *sadhus*

rarely show this spirit in themselves. Obviously, they have no great treasure of the religious spirit to guard. In one beautiful phrase, Narasinha Mehta, best among the lovers of God, has shown in what spirit consists :

Vain, vain all spiritual effort

Without meditation on the Self.

He said this out of his own vast experience. It tells us that religion does not necessarily dwell even in the man of great austerities or a great yogi who knows all the procedures of Yoga. I have not the least doubt that Gokhale was wise in the truth of the Self. He never pretended to observe any religious practice but his life was full of the true spirit of religion. Every age is known to have its predominant mode of spiritual effort best suited for the attainment of *moksha*. Whenever the religious spirit is on the decline, it is revived through such an effort in tune with times. In this age, our degradation reveals itself through our political condition. Not taking a comprehensive view of things we run away with the belief that, if but our political conditions improved, we would rise from this fallen state. This is only partially true. To be sure, we cannot rise again till our political condition changes for the better; but it is not true that we shall necessarily progress if our political condition undergoes a change, irrespective of the manner in which it is brought about. If the means employed are impure, the change will be not in the direction of progress but very likely the opposite. Only a change brought about in our political condition by pure means can lead to real progress. Gokhale not only perceived this right at the beginning of his public life but also followed the principle in action. Everyone had realized that popular awakening could be brought about only

through political activity. If such activity was spiritualized, it could show the path to *moksha*. He placed this great ideal before his Servants of India Society and before the whole nation. He firmly declared that, unless our political movement was informed with the spirit of religion, it would be barren. A writer drew particular attention to this aspect of Gokhale's mission and, doubting if his efforts to create political *sannyasis* would bear fruit, warned the Servants of India Society, which he left as his legacy, to be vigilant. In this age, only political *sannyasis* can fulfil and adorn the ideal of *sannyasa*, others will more likely than not disgrace the *sannyasi's* saffron garb. No Indian who aspires to follow the way of true religion can afford to remain aloof from politics. In other words, one who aspires to a truly religious life cannot fail to undertake public service as his mission, and we are today so much caught up in the political machine that service of the people is impossible without taking part in politics. In olden days, our peasants, though ignorant of who ruled them, led their simple lives free from fear; they can no longer afford to be so unconcerned. In the circumstances that obtain today, in following the path of religion they must take into account the political conditions. If our sadhus, *rishis*, *munis*, maulvis and priests realized the truth of this, we would have a Servants of India Society in every village, the spirit of religion would come to prevail all over India, the political system which has become odious would reform itself, India would regain the spiritual empire which, we know, it enjoyed in the days gone by, the bonds which hold India under subjection would be severed in an instant, and the ideal state which an ancient seer described in his immortal words would come into being : "Iron would be used not for forging swords but forging ploughshares, and the lion and the lamb would be friends and live together in love." Gokhale's ideal in his life was to labour to

bring about this state of affairs. That, indeed, is his message and I believe that whoever reads his writings with an open mind will recognize this message in every word of his.

The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV

WHY I FASTED

March 27, 1918

Perhaps I owe an explanation to the public with regard to my recent fast.* Some friends consider the action to have been silly, others cowardly and some others still worse. In my opinion, I would have been untrue to my Maker and to the cause I was espousing, if I had acted otherwise.

When over a month ago I reached Bombay, I was told that Ahmedabad mill-hands had threatened a strike and violence if the bonus that was given to them during the plague was withdrawn. I was asked to intervene and I consented. Owing to the plague the men were getting as much as 70 per cent bonus since August last. An attempt to recall that bonus had resulted in grave dissatisfaction among the labourers. When it was almost too late, the mill-owners offered in the place of the plague bonus and for the sake of the high prices a rise of 20 per cent. The labourers were unsatisfied. The matter was referred to arbitration, Mr. Chatfield, the Collector, being the umpire. The men in some mills however struck work. The owners, thinking that they had done so without just cause, withdrew from the arbitration and declared a general lock-out to be continued till the labourers were exhausted

* Gandhiji had gone on a fast on March 15, 1918 in connection with Ahmedabad mill-hands strike. The fast ended on March 18th when the settlement was reached between the mill-owners and mill-workers.

into accepting the 20 per cent increase they had offered. Messrs Shankerlal Banker, V. J. Patel and I, the arbitrators appointed on behalf of the labourers thought that they were to be demoralized if we did not act promptly and decisively. We, therefore, investigated the question of increase. We sought the mill-owners' assistance. They would not give it. Their one purpose was to organize themselves into a combination that could fight a similar combination of their employees. One-sided technically though our investigation was, we endeavoured to examine the mill-owners' side and came to the conclusion that a 35 per cent increase was fair. Before announcing the figure to the mill-hands, we informed the employers of the result of our inquiry and told them that we would correct ourselves if they could show any error. The latter would not co-operate. They sent a reply saying as much, but they pointed out in it that the rate of increase granted by the Government as also the employers in Bombay was much less than the one contemplated by us. I felt that the addendum was beside the point and at a huge meeting announced 35 per cent for the mill-hands' acceptance. Be it noted that the plague bonus amounted to 70 per cent of their wages and they had declared their intention of accepting not less than 50 per cent as high prices increase. They were now called upon to accept the mean (the fixing of the mean was quite an accident) between the mill-owners 20 per cent, and their own 50 per cent. After some grumbling, the meeting accepted the 35 per cent increase, it always being understood that they would recognize, at the same time, the principle of arbitration whenever the mill-owners did so. From that time forward, i.e., 26th February last, day after day thousands of people gathered together under the shade of a tree outside the city walls, people walking long distances in many cases, and solemnly repeated their determination in the name of God not to accept anything less than 35 per cent. No pecuniary

assistance was given to them. It is easy enough to understand that many must suffer from the pangs of starvation and that they could not, while they were without employment, get any credit. We who were helping them came, on the other hand, to the conclusion that we would only spoil them if we collected public funds and utilized them for feeding them unless the able-bodied amongst them were ready to perform bread labour. It was a difficult task to persuade men, who had worked at machines, to shoulder baskets of sand or bricks. They came but they did so grudgingly. The mill-owners hardened their hearts. They were equally determined not to go beyond 20 per cent and they appointed emissaries to persuade the men to give in. Even during the early part of the lock-out, whilst we had declined to help those who would not work, we had assured them that we would feed and clothe ourselves after feeding and clothing them. Twenty-two days had passed by. Hunger and the mill-owners' emissaries were producing their effect and Satan was whispering to the men that there was no such thing as God on earth who would help them and that vows were dodges resorted to by weaklings. One morning instead of an eager and enthusiastic crowd of 5 to 10 thousand men with determination written on their faces, I met a body of about 2,000 men with despair written on their faces. We had just heard that mill-hands living in a particular chawl had declined to attend the meeting, were preparing to go to work and accept 20 per cent increase and were taunting us (I think very properly) that it was very well for us who had motors at our disposal and plenty of food, to attend their meetings and advise staunchness even unto death. What was I to do? I held the cause to be just. I believe in God as I believe that I am writing this. I believe in the necessity of the performance of one's promises at all costs. I knew that the men before us were god-fearing men, but that the long-drawn-out lock-out or strike was putting an undue

strain upon them. I had the knowledge before me that during my extensive travels in India, hundreds of people were found who as readily broke their promises as they made them. I knew, too, that the best of us have but a vague and indistinct belief in soul-force and in God. I felt that it was a sacred moment for me, my faith was on the anvil, and I had no hesitation to rising and declaring to the men that a breach of their vow so solemnly taken was unendurable by me and that I would not take any food until they had the 35 per cent increase given or until they had fallen. A meeting that was up to now unlike the former meetings, totally unresponsive, woke up as if by magic. Tears trickled down the cheeks of every one of them and men after men rose up saying that they would never go to the mills unless they got the increase and that they would go about the city and steel the hearts of those who had not attended the meeting. It was a privilege to witness the demonstration of the efficacy of truth and love. Every one immediately realized that the protecting power of God was as much with us today as it used to be in the days of yore. I am not sorry for the vow but with the belief that I have, I would have been unworthy of the trust undertaken by me, if I had done anything less. Before I took the vow I knew that there were serious defects about it. For me to take such a vow in order to affect in any shape or form the decision of the mill-owners would be a cowardly injustice done to them and that I would prove myself unfit for the friendship which I had the privilege of enjoying with some of them. I knew that I ran the risk of being misunderstood. I could not prevent my fast from affecting their decision. Their knowledge, moreover, put a responsibility on me which I was ill able to bear. From now I disabled myself from gaining concessions for the men which ordinarily, in a struggle such as this, I would be entirely justified in securing. I knew, too, that I would have to be satisfied with the minimum I could

get from the mill-owners and with a fulfilment of the letter of the men's vow rather than its spirit and so hath it happened. I put the effect of my vow in one scale and the merits of it in the other. There are hardly any acts of human beings which are free from all taint. Mine, I know, was exceptionally tainted but I preferred the ignominy of having unworthily compromised by my vow the position and independence of the mill-owners rather than that it should be said by posterity that 10,000 men had suddenly broken a vow which they had for over twenty days solemnly taken and repeated in the name of God. I am fully convinced that no body of men can make themselves into a nation or perform great tasks unless they become as true as steel and unless their promises come to be regarded by the world like the law of the Medes and Persians, inflexible and unbreakable, and whatever may be the verdict of friends, so far as I can think at present, on given occasions I should not hesitate in future to repeat the humble performance which I have taken the liberty of describing in this communication.

I cannot conclude without mentioning two names of whom India has every reason to be proud. The mill-owners were represented by Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai who is a gentleman in every sense of the term. He is a man of great culture and equally great abilities. He adds to these qualities a resolute will. The mill-hands were represented by his sister Anasuyabehn. She possesses a heart of gold. She is full of pity for the poor. The mill-hands adore her. Her word is law with them. I have not known a struggle fought with so little bitterness and such courtesy on either side. This happy result is principally due to the connection with it of Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai and Anasuyabehn.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF THE MOVEMENT*

April 18, 1919

It is not without sorrow I feel compelled to advise the temporary suspension of civil disobedience. I give this advice not because I have less faith now in its efficacy but because I have, if possible, greater faith than before. It is my perception of the law of satyagraha which impels me to suggest the suspension. I am sorry, when I embarked upon a mass movement, I underrated the forces of evil and I must now pause and consider how best to meet the situation. But whilst doing so, I wish to say from a careful examination of the tragedy at Ahmedabad and Viramgam, I am convinced that satyagraha had nothing to do with the violence of the mob and that many swarmed round the banner of mischief raised by the mob, largely because of their affection for Anasuya Bai and myself. Had the Government in an unwise manner not prevented me from entering Delhi and so compelled me to disobey their orders, I feel certain that Ahmedabad and Viramgam would have remained free from the horrors of the last week. In other

* Gandhiji had called upon the nation to observe hartal on April 6th as a mark of protest against the passing of Rowlatt Act. Then while on his way to Delhi he was arrested, which made the people furious and there were acts of violence, especially in Ahmedabad and Viramgam. This caused Gandhiji to suspend civil disobedience for a time. *Vide* also "Statement to Disorders Inquiry Committee", 5-1-1920.

words, satyagraha has neither been the cause nor the occasion of upheaval. If anything, the presence of satyagraha has acted as a check ever so slight upon the previously existing lawless elements.

As regards events in the Punjab, it is admitted that they are unconnected with the satyagraha movement. In the course of the satyagraha struggle in South Africa, several thousands of indentured Indians had struck work. This was satyagraha strike and therefore entirely peaceful and voluntary. Whilst the strike was going on, a strike of European miners, railway employees, etc., was declared. Overtures were made to me to make common cause with the European strikers. As a satyagrahi I did not require a moment's consideration to decline to do so. I went further, and for fear of our strike being classed with the strike of the Europeans in which methods of violence and use of arms found a prominent place, ours was suspended and satyagraha from that moment came to be recognized by the Europeans of South Africa as an honourable and honest movement; in the words of the General Smuts, a constitutional movement. I can do no less at the present critical moment. I would be untrue to satyagraha if I allowed it by any action of mine to be used as an occasion for feeding violence, for embittering relations between the English and the Indians. Our satyagraha must therefore now consist in ceaselessly helping the authorities in all the ways available to us as satyagrahis to restore order to curb lawlessness.

We must fearlessly spread the doctrine of *satya* and *ahimsa* and then, and not till then, shall we be able to undertake mass satyagraha. My attitude towards the Rowlatt legislation remains unchanged. Indeed I do feel that the Rowlatt legislation is one of the many causes of the present unrest. But in a surcharged atmosphere I must refrain from

examining these causes. The main and only purpose of this communication is to advise all satyagrahis to temporarily suspend civil disobedience, to give Government effective co-operation in restoring order, and by preaching and practice to gain adherence to the fundamental principles mentioned above.

The Hindu, 21-4-1919

SWARAJ IN SWADESHI

The much-talked-of Reforms Bill* will become the law of the land within a few days and in due course the new legislatures will take the place of the old. H.E. the Viceroy has announced that he is going loyally to abide by the new scheme and that he will try to make it a success. I have refrained from expressing an opinion on the report of the Joint Committee for I do not feel sufficiently interested in it. It is not possible to be enthused over a thing which when analysed means little for the people. So far, therefore, as the Reform Scheme is concerned, I would simply urge that we should take the fullest advantage of it and, like the Viceroy, loyally work to make it a success. That it is an improvement upon the original measure is admitted by all.

But the real reform that India needs is swadeshi in its true sense. The immediate problem before us is not how to run the government of the country, but how to feed and clothe ourselves. In 1918 we sent sixty crores of rupees out of India for buying cloth. If we continue to purchase foreign cloth at that rate, we deprive the Indian weaver and spinner of that amount from year to year without practically giving him or her any other work in exchange. No wonder a tenth at least of the population is cruelly half-starved and the majority of the rest underfed. He who has eyes may see for himself that the middle-class people are already being

* The Government of India Act, 1919, embodying the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals for constitutional reforms

underfed and our babies are not getting enough milk for themselves. The Reform Scheme, no matter how liberal it is, will not help to solve the problem in the immediate future. But swadeshi can solve it now.

The Punjab has made the solution still clearer to me. God be thanked that the beautiful women of the Punjab have not yet lost the cunning of their fingers. High or low, they still know the art of spinning. They have not yet burnt their spinning-wheels as many Gujarati women have done. It is to me a perfect delight to find them throwing balls of yarn into my lap. They admit they have time at their disposal for spinning. They admit that the khaddar woven from their hand-spun yarn is superior to the machine-spun yarn. Our forefathers were well able to clothe themselves with little effort and with perfect comfort without having to buy from the foreign markets.

This beautiful art—and yet so simple—is in danger of being lost if we do not wake up betimes. The Punjab gives proof of its possibilities. But the Punjab too is fast losing her hold of it. Every year witnesses a decrease in the output of hand-spun yarn. It means greater poverty in our homes and greater idleness. The women who have ceased to spin are not utilizing their time in any other or better manner than gossiping.

But one thing is needful to undo the mischief. If every educated Indian will realize his clear primary duty, he will straightway present the women of his household with a spinning-wheel and provide the facilities for learning the art of spinning. Millions of yards of yarn can be produced from day to day. And if every educated Indian will condescend to wear the cloth produced from such yarn, he will

support and assist in rebuilding the only possible cottage industry of India.

Without a cottage industry the Indian peasant is doomed. He cannot maintain himself from the produce of the land. He needs a supplementary industry. Spinning is the easiest, the cheapest and the best.

I know this means a revolution in our mental outlook. And it is because it is a revolution that I claim that the way to swaraj lies through swadeshi. A nation that can save sixty crores of rupees per year and distribute that large sum amongst its spinners and weavers in their own homes will have acquired powers of organization and industry that must enable it to do everything else necessary for its organic growth.

The dreamy reformer whispers, "Wait till I get responsible government and I will protect India's industry, without our women having to spin and our weaver having to weave." This has been actually said by thinking men. I venture to suggest that there is a double fallacy underlying the proposition. India cannot wait for a protective tariff and protection will not reduce the cost of clothing. Secondly, mere protection will not benefit the starving millions. They can only be helped by being enabled to supplement their earnings by having a spinning industry restored to them. So whether we have a protective tariff or not, we shall still have to revive the hand-spinning industry and stimulate hand-weaving.

When the war was raging, all available hands in America and England were utilized in the naval yards for building ships and they built them, too, at an amazing pace. If I would have my way, I would make every available Indian

learn spinning or weaving and make him or her do that work for a certain fixed portion of every day. I would start with schools and colleges presenting as they do ready-made organized units.

Multiplication of mills cannot solve the problem. They will take too long to overtake the drain and they cannot distribute the sixty crores in our homes. They can only cause concentration of money and labour and thus make confusion worse confounded.

Young India, 10-12-1919

STATEMENT TO DISORDERS INQUIRY COMMITTEE*

January 5, 1920

For the past thirty years I have been preaching and practising satyagraha. The principles of satyagraha, as I know it today, constitute a gradual evolution.

Satyagraha differs from passive resistance as North Pole from South. The latter has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence for the purpose of gaining one's end, whereas the former has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form.

The term satyagraha was coined by me in South Africa to express the force that the Indians there used for full eight years and it was coined in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of passive resistance.

Its root meaning is holding on to truth, hence truth-force. I have also called it love-force or soul-force. In the application of satyagraha, I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted

* The Disorders Inquiry Committee was appointed by the Government to go into the happenings in the Punjab consequent upon the introduction of Martial Law and Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

on one's opponent but that he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent, but on one's self.

But on the political field, the struggle on behalf of the people mostly consists in opposing error in the shape of unjust laws. When you have failed to bring the error home to the law-giver by way of petitions and the like, the only remedy open to you, if you do not wish to submit to error, is to compel him by physical force to you or by suffering in your own person by inviting the penalty for the breach of the law. Hence satyagraha largely appears to the public as civil resistance. It is civil in the sense that it is not criminal.

The law-breaker breaks the law surreptitiously and tries to avoid the penalty ; not so the civil resister. He ever obeys the laws of the State to which he belongs not out of fear of the sanctions but because he considers them to be good for the welfare of society. But there come occasions, generally rare, when he considers certain laws to be so unjust as to render obedience to them a dishonour. He then openly and civilly breaks them and quietly suffers the penalty for their breach. And in order to register his protest against the action of the law-givers, it is open to him to withdraw his co-operation from the State by disobeying such other laws whose breach does not involve moral turpitude.

In my opinion, the beauty and efficacy of satyagraha are so great and the doctrine so simple that it can be preached even to children. It was preached by me to thousands of men, women and children commonly called indentured

Indians, with excellent results.

When the Rowlatt Bills were published I felt that they were so restrictive of human liberty that they must be resisted to the utmost. I observed too that the opposition to them was universal among Indians. I submit that no State, however despotic, has the right to enact laws which are repugnant to the whole body of the people, much less a government guided by constitutional usage and precedent such as the Indian Government. I felt too that oncoming agitation needed a definite direction if it was neither to collapse nor to run into violent channels.

I ventured therefore to present satyagraha to the country emphasizing its civil resistance aspect. And as it is purely an inward and purifying movement, I suggested the observance of fast, prayer and suspension of all work for one day—the 6th of April. There was a magnificent response throughout the length and breadth of India, even in little villages, although there was no organization and no great previous preparation. The idea was given to the public as soon as it was conceived. On the 6th April there was no violence used by the people and no collision with the police worth naming. The hartal was purely voluntary and spontaneous. I attach hereto the letter in which the idea was announced.

The observance of the 6th April was to be followed by civil disobedience. For the purpose the Committee of the Satyagraha Sabha had selected certain political laws for disobedience. And we commenced the distribution of prohibited literature of a perfectly healthy type, e.g., a pamphlet written by me on Home Rule, a translation of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, *The Defence and Death of Socrates*, etc.

But there is no doubt that the 6th of April found India vitalized as never before. The people who were fear-stricken ceased to fear authority. Moreover, hitherto the masses had lain inert. The leaders had not really acted upon them. They were undisciplined. They had found a new force but they did not know what it was and how to use it.

At Delhi, the leaders found it difficult to restrain the very large number of people who had remained unmoved before. At Amritsar, Dr. Satyapal was anxious that I should go there and show to the people the peaceful nature of satyagraha. Swami Shraddhanandji from Delhi and Dr. Satyapal from Amritsar wrote to me asking me to go to their respective places for pacifying the people and for explaining to them the nature of satyagraha. I had never been to Amritsar and, for that matter, to the Punjab before. These two messages were seen by the authorities and they knew that I was invited to both the places for peaceful purposes.

I left Bombay for Delhi and Punjab on the 8th April and had telegraphed to Dr. Satyapal, whom I had never met before, to meet me at Delhi. But after passing Mathura I was served with an order prohibiting me from entering the province of Delhi. I felt that I was bound to disregard this order and I proceeded on my journey. At Palwal, I was served with another order prohibiting me from entering the Punjab and confining me to the Bombay Presidency. And I was arrested by a party of police and taken off the train at that station. The Superintendent of Police who arrested me acted with every courtesy. I was taken to Mathura by the first available train and thence by goods train early in the morning to Sawai Madhopur, where I joined the Bombay Mail from Peshawar and was taken charge of by Superintendent Bowring. I was discharged at Bombay on the 10th April.

But the people of Ahmedabad and Viramgam and in Gujarat generally had heard of my arrest. They became furious, shops were closed, crowds gathered, and murder, arson, pillage, wire-cutting and attempt at derailment followed.

I had worked in the midst of Kaira raiyats just before and had mixed among thousands of men and women. I had worked at the instance of and with Miss Anasuya Sarabhai among the mill-hands of Ahmedabad. The mill-hands appreciated her philanthropic work and adored her. The fury of the labourers in Ahmedabad reached white heat when a false rumour was started that she too was arrested. Both of us had visited and interceded for the mill-hands of Viramgam when they were in trouble. And it is my firm belief that the excesses were due to the great resentment of the mobs over my arrest and the rumoured arrest of Miss Anasuya Sarabhai.

I have mixed with the masses in practically the whole of India and talked to them freely. I do not believe there was any revolutionary movement behind the excesses. They could hardly be dignified by the term 'rebellion'.

And, in my opinion, the Government erred in prosecuting the offenders for waging war. This hasty view has caused unmerited or disproportionate suffering. The fine imposed on poor Ahmedabad was heavy and the manner of collecting it from the labourers was unnecessarily harsh and irritating. I doubt the justice of inflicting on the labourers a fine so large as 1,76,000 (one hundred and seventy-six thousand) rupees. The imposition of the cost from the farmers of Barejadi and from the Banias and Patidars of Nadiad was totally unjustified and even vindictive. I think that the introduction of Martial Law in Ahmedabad was also unjustified and its thoughtless

administration resulted in the loss of several innocent lives.

At the same time, and subject to the reservations mentioned by me, I have no doubt that, in the Bombay Presidency, the authorities acted with considerable restraint at a time when the atmosphere was surcharged with mutual suspicion and the attempt at wrecking the train which was bringing the troops to restore order had naturally angered the authorities.

Evidence Before Disorders Inquiry Committee, Vol. II

NEITHER A SAINT NOR A POLITICIAN

A kind friend has sent me the following cutting from the April number of *East and West*.

Mr. Gandhi has the reputation of a saint but it seems that the politician in him often dominates his decisions. He has been making great use of hartals and there can be no gainsaying that under his direction hartal is becoming a powerful political weapon for uniting the educated and the uneducated on a single question of the day. The hartal is not without its disadvantages. It is teaching direct action, and direct action, however potent, does not work for unity. Is Mr. Gandhi quite sure that he is serving the highest behests of ahimsa, harmlessness? His proposal to commemorate the shooting at Jallianwala Bagh is not likely to promote concord. It is a tragic incident into which our Government was betrayed, but is the memory of its bitterness worth retaining? Can we not commemorate the event by raising a temple of peace, to help the widows and orphans to bless the souls of those who died without knowing why? The world is full of politicians and pettifoggers who, in the name of patriotism, poison the inner sweetness of man and, as a result, we have wars and feuds and such shameless slaughter as turned Jallianwala Bagh into a shambles. Shall we not now try for a larger symbiosis such as Buddha and Christ preached, and bring the world to breathe and prosper together? Mr. Gandhi seemed destined to be the apostle of such a movement, but circumstances are forcing him to seek the way of

raising resistances and group unities. He may yet take up the larger mission of uniting the world.

I have given the whole of the quotation. As a rule I do not notice criticism of me or my methods except when thereby I acknowledge a mistake or enforce still further the principles criticized. I have a double reason for noticing the extract. For, not only do I hope further to elucidate the principles I hold dear, but I want to show my regard for the author of the criticism whom I know and whom I have admired for many years for the singular beauty of his character. The critic regrets to see in me a politician, whereas he expected me to be a saint. Now I think that the word "saint" should be ruled out of present life. It is too sacred a word to be lightly applied to anybody, much less to one like myself who claims only to be a humble searcher after truth, knows his limitations, makes mistakes, never hesitates to admit them when he makes them, and frankly confesses that he, like a scientist, is making experiments about some of the eternal verities of life, but cannot even claim to be a scientist because he can show no tangible proof of scientific accuracy in his methods or such tangible results of his experiments as modern science demands. But though by disclaiming sainthood I disappoint the critic's expectations, I would have him to give up his regrets by answering him that the politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake, as I have been doing, with more or less success, consciously since 1894, unconsciously, as I have now discovered, ever since reaching the years of discretion. Quite selfishly, as I wish to live in peace in the midst of a bellowing storm howling round me, I have been experimenting

with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics. Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion, which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.

It was in that religious spirit that I came upon hartal. I wanted to show that it is not a knowledge of letters that would give India consciousness of herself, or that would bind the educated together. The hartal illuminated the whole of India as if by magic on the 6th of April, 1919. And had it not been for the interruption of the 10th of April, brought about by Satan whispering fear into the ears of a Government conscious of its own wrong and inciting to anger a people that were prepared for it by utter distrust of the Government, India would have risen to an unimaginable height. The hartal had not only been taken up by the great masses of people in a truly religious spirit but it was intended to be a prelude to a series of direct actions.

But my critic deploras direct action. For, he says, "it does not work for unity". I join issue with him. Never has anything been done on this earth without direct action. I rejected the word "passive resistance", because of its insufficiency and its being interpreted as a weapon of the weak. It was direct action in South Africa which told and told so effectively that it converted General Smuts to sanity. He was in 1906 the most relentless opponent of Indian aspirations. In 1914

he took pride in doing tardy justice by removing from the statute-book of the Union a disgraceful measure* which in 1909 he had told Lord Morley would be never removed for he then said South Africa would never tolerate repeal of a measure which was twice passed by the Transvaal Legislature. But what is more, direct action sustained for eight years† left behind it not only no bitterness, but the very Indians who put up such a stubborn fight against General Smuts, ranged themselves round his banner in 1915 and fought under him in East Africa. It was direct action in Champaran which removed an age-long grievance. A meek submission when one is chafing under a disability or a grievance which one would gladly see removed, not only does not make for unity, but makes the weak party acid, angry and prepares him for an opportunity to explode. By allying myself with the weak party, by teaching him direct, firm, but harmless action, I make him feel strong and capable of defying the physical might. He feels braced for the struggle, regains confidence in himself and knowing that the remedy lies with himself, ceases to harbour the spirit of revenge and learns to be satisfied with a redress of the wrong he is seeking to remedy.

It is working along the same lines that I have ventured to suggest a memorial about Jallianwala Bagh. The writer in *East and West* has ascribed to me a proposal which has never once crossed my mind. He thinks that I want "to commemorate the shooting at Jallianwala Bagh". Nothing can be further from my thought than to perpetuate the memory of a black deed. I dare say that before we have come to our own we shall have a repetition of the tragedy and I will prepare the nation for it by treasuring the memory of the innocent

* The Transvaal Asiatic Registration Act

† From 1906 to 1914

dead. The widows and the orphans have been and are being helped, but we cannot "bless the souls of those who died without knowing why", if we will not acquire the ground which has been hallowed by innocent blood and there erect a suitable memorial for them. It is not to serve, if I can help it, as a reminder of the foul deed but it shall serve as an encouragement to the nation that it is better to die helpless and unarmed and as victims rather than as tyrants. I would have the future generations remember that we who witnessed the innocent dying did not ungratefully refuse to cherish their memory. As Mrs. Jinnah truly remarked when she gave her mite to the fund, the memorial would at least give us an excuse for living. After all it will be the spirit in which the memorial is erected that will decide its character.

What was the "larger symbiosis" that Buddha and Christ preached? Buddha fearlessly carried the war into the enemy's camp and brought down on its knees an arrogant priesthood. Christ drove out the money-changers from the temple of Jerusalem and drew down curses from Heaven upon the hypocrites and Pharisees. Both were for intensely direct action. But even as Buddha and Christ chastised they showed unmistakable gentleness and love behind every act of theirs. They would not raise a finger against their enemies, but would gladly surrender themselves rather than the truth for which they lived. Buddha would have died resisting the priesthood, if the majesty of his love had not proved to be equal to the task of bending the priesthood. Christ died on the Cross with a crown of thorns on his head defying the might of a whole Empire. And if I raise resistances of a non-violent character I simply and humbly follow in the footsteps of the great teachers named by my critic.

Lastly, the writer of the paragraph quarrels with my

“grouping unities”, and would have me take up “the larger mission of uniting the world”. I once told him under a common roof that I was probably more cosmopolitan than he. I abide by the expression. Unless I group unities I shall never be able to unite the whole world. Tolstoy once said that if we would but get off the backs of our neighbours the world would be quite all right without any further help from us. And if we can only serve our immediate neighbours by ceasing to prey upon them, the circle of unities thus grouped in the right fashion will ever grow in circumference till at last it is coterminus with that of the whole world. More than that it is not given to any man to try or achieve. “As in the body, so in the universe” is as true today as ages ago when it was first uttered by an unknown *rishi*.

Young India, 12-5-1920

THE LAW OF SUFFERING

No country has ever risen without being purified through the fire of suffering. Mother suffers so that her child may live. The condition of wheat-growing is that the seed grain should perish. Life comes out of Death. Will India rise out of her slavery without fulfilling this eternal law of purification through suffering ?

If my advisers are right, evidently India will realize her destiny without travail. For their chief concern is that the events of April 1919, should not be repeated. They fear non-co-operation because it would involve the sufferings of many. If Hampden had argued thus he would not have withheld payment of ship-money, nor would Wat Tayer have raised the standard of revolt. English and French histories are replete with instances of men continuing their pursuit of the right irrespective of the amount of suffering involved. The actors did not stop to think whether ignorant people would not have involuntarily to suffer. Why should we expect to write our history differently ? It is possible for us, if we would, to learn from the mistakes of our predecessors to do better, but it is impossible to do away with the law of suffering which is the one indispensable condition of our being. The way to do better is to avoid, if we can, violence from our side and thus quicken the rate of progress and to introduce greater purity in the methods of suffering. We can, if we will, refrain, in our impatience, from bending the wrongdoer to our will by physical force as Sinn Feiners are doing today, or from coercing our neighbours to follow our

methods as was done last year by some of us in bringing about hartal. Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone by the sufferer. The purer the suffering, the greater is the progress. Hence did the sacrifice of Jesus suffice to free a sorrowing world. In his onward march he did not count the cost of suffering entailed upon his neighbours, whether it was undergone by them voluntarily or otherwise. Thus did the sufferings of a Harischandra suffice to re-establish the kingdom of truth. He must have known that his subjects would suffer involuntarily by his abdication. He did not mind because he could not do otherwise than follow truth.

I have already stated that I do not deplore the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh so much as I deplore the murders of Englishmen and destruction of property by ourselves. The frightfulness at Amritsar drew away public attention from the greater though slower frightfulness at Lahore where attempt was made to emasculate the inhabitants by slow processes. But before we rise higher we shall have to undergo such processes many more times till they teach us to take up suffering voluntarily and to find joy in it. I am convinced that the Lahorians never deserved the cruel insults that they were subjected to; they never hurt a single Englishman; they never destroyed any property. But a wilful ruler was determined to crush the spirit of a people just trying to throw off his chafing yoke. And if I am told that all this was due to my preaching satyagraha, my answer is that I would preach satyagraha all the more forcibly for that, so long as I have breath left in me, and tell the people that next time they would answer O'Dwyerean insolence not by opening shops by reason of threats of forcible sales but by allowing the tyrant to do his worst and let him sell their all but their unconquerable souls. Sages of old mortified

the flesh so that the spirit within might be set free, so that their trained bodies might be proof against any injury that might be inflicted on them by tyrants seeking to impose their will on them. And if India wishes to revive her ancient wisdom and to avoid the errors of Europe, if India wishes to see the Kingdom of God established on earth instead of that of Satan which has enveloped Europe, then I would urge her sons and daughters not to be deceived by fine phrases, the terrible subtleties that hedge us in, the fears of suffering that India may have to undergo, but to see what is happening today in Europe and from it understand that we must go through the suffering even as Europe has gone through, but not the process of making others suffer. Germany wanted to dominate Europe and the Allies wanted to do likewise by crushing Germany. Europe is no better for Germany's fall. The Allies have proved themselves to be just as deceitful, cruel, greedy and selfish as Germany was or would have been. Germany would have avoided the sanctimonious humbug that one sees associated with the many dealings of the Allies.

The miscalculation that I deplored last year was not in connection with the sufferings imposed upon the people, but about the mistakes made by them and violence done by them owing to their not having sufficiently understood the message of satyagraha. What then is the meaning of non-co-operation in terms of the Law of Suffering? We must voluntarily put up with the losses and inconveniences that arise from having to withdraw our support from a Government that is ruling against our will. Possession of power and riches is a crime under an unjust government; poverty in that case is a virtue, says Thoreau. It may be that in the transition state we may make mistakes; there may be avoidable suffering. These things are preferable to

national emasculation.

We must refuse to wait for the wrong to be righted till the wrongdoer has been roused to a sense of his inequity. We must not, for fear of ourselves or others having to suffer, remain participators in it. But we must combat the wrong by ceasing to assist the wrongdoer directly or indirectly.

If a father does an injustice, it is the duty of his children to leave the parental roof. If the head master of a school conducts his institution on an immoral basis, the pupils must leave the school. If the chairman of a corporation is corrupt, the members thereof must wash their hands clean of his corruption by withdrawing from it; even so, if a government does a grave injustice, the subject must withdraw co-operation wholly or partially, sufficiently to wean the ruler from his wickedness. In each case conceived by me there is an element of suffering whether mental or physical. Without such suffering it is not possible to attain freedom.

Young India, 16-6-1920

THE FIRST OF AUGUST, 1920

Many people dread the advent of non-co-operation because of the events of last year. They fear madness from the mob and consequent repetition of last years' reprisals almost unsurpassed in their ferocity in the history of modern times. Personally I do not mind Governmental fury as I mind mob fury. The latter is a sign of national distemper and therefore more difficult to deal with than the former which is confined to a small corporation. It is easier to oust a government that has rendered itself unfit to govern than it is to cure unknown people in a mob of their madness. But great movements cannot be stopped altogether because a government or a people or both go wrong. We learn and profit through our mistakes and failures. No General worth the name gives up a battle because he has suffered reverses, or, which is the same thing, made mistakes. And so we must approach non-co-operation with confidence and hope. As in the past, the commencement is to be marked by fasting and prayer—a sign of the religious character of the demonstration. . . .

The giving up of titles and honorary posts should also commence from the first of August. Doubt has been expressed as to the sufficiency of notice regarding surrender of titles and honorary posts. It is however quickly dispelled by bearing in mind that the first of August marks the commencement of the surrender of titles. It is not the only day on which surrender has to take place. Indeed, I do not expect a very large response on the first day. A vigorous propaganda will

have to be carried on and the message delivered to every title or post holder and the argument presented to him proving the duty of such surrender.

But the greatest thing in this campaign of non-co-operation is to evolve order, discipline, co-operation among the people, co-ordination among the workers. Effective non-co-operation depends upon complete organization. Thousands of men who have filled meetings throughout the Punjab have convinced me that the people want to withdraw co-operation from the Government, but they must know how. Most people do not understand the complicated machinery of the Government. They do not realize that every citizen silently but nonetheless certainly sustains the Government of the day in ways of which he has no knowledge. Every citizen therefore renders himself responsible for every act of his Government. And it is quite proper to support it so long as the actions of the Government are bearable. But when they hurt him and his nation, it becomes his duty to withdraw his support.

But as I have said, every citizen does not know how to do so in an orderly manner. Disorderliness comes from anger, orderliness out of intelligent resistance. The first condition therefore of real success is to ensure entire absence of violence. Violence done to persons representing the Government or to persons who don't join our ranks, i. e., the supporters of the Government, means in every case retrogression in our case, cessation of non-co-operation and useless waste of innocent lives. Those therefore who wish to make non-co-operation a success in the quickest possible time, will consider it their first duty to see that in their neighbourhood complete order is kept.

SWARAJ IN ONE YEAR

Much laughter has been indulged in at my expense for having told the Congress audience at Calcutta that, if there was sufficient response to my programme of non-co-operation, swaraj would be attained in one year. Some have ignored my condition and laughed because of the impossibility of getting swaraj anyhow within one year. Others have spelt the "if" in capitals and suggested that if "ifs" were permissible in argument, any absurdity could be proved to be a possibility. My proposition, however, is based on a mathematical calculation. And I venture to say that true swaraj is a practical impossibility without due fulfilment of my conditions. Swaraj means a state in which we can maintain our separate existence without the presence of the English. If it is to be a partnership, it must be a partnership at will. There can be no swaraj without our feeling and being the equals of Englishmen. Today we feel that we are dependent upon them for our internal and external security, for an armed peace between the Hindus and the Mussulmans, for our education and for the supply of daily wants, nay, even for the settlement of our religious squabbles. The Rajahs are dependent upon the British for their powers and the millionaires for their millions. The British know our helplessness and Sir Thomas Holland cracks jokes quite legitimately at the expense of non-co-operationists. To get swaraj then is to get rid of our helplessness. The problem is no doubt stupendous, even as it was for the fabled lion who, having been brought up in the company of goats, found it impossible to feel that he was a lion. As Tolstoy used to put it: Mankind often laboured

under hypnotism. Under its spell continuously we feel the feeling of helplessness. The British themselves cannot be expected to help us out of it. On the contrary they din into our ears that we shall be fit to govern ourselves only by slow educative processes. The *Times* suggested that if we boycott the councils, we shall lose the opportunity of a training in swaraj. I have no doubt that there are many who believe what the *Times* says. It even resorts to falsehood. It audaciously says that Lord Milner's Mission listened to the Egyptians only when they were ready to lift the boycott of the Egyptian Council. For me the only training in swaraj we need is the ability to defend ourselves against the whole world and to live our natural life in perfect freedom even though it may be full of defects. Good government is no substitute for self-government. The Afghans have a bad government, but it is self-government. I envy them. The Japanese learnt the art through a sea of blood. And if we today had the power to drive out the English by superior brute force, we would be counted their superiors, and in spite of our inexperience in debating at the council table or in holding executive offices, we would be held fit to govern ourselves. For brute force is the only test the West has hitherto recognized. The Germans were defeated not because they were necessarily in the wrong but because the Allied Powers were found to possess greater brute strength. In the end, therefore, India must either learn the art of war which the British will not teach her, or she must follow her own way of discipline and self-sacrifice through non-cooperation. It is as amazing as it is humiliating that less than one hundred thousand white men should be able to rule three hundred and fifteen million Indians. They do so somewhat undoubtedly by force but more by securing our co-operation in a thousand ways and making us more and more helpless and dependent on them as time goes forward. Let us not mistake reformed councils, more law courts and even govern-

orships for real freedom or power. They are but subtler methods of emasculation. The British cannot rule us by mere force. And so they resort to all means, honourable and dishonourable in order to retain their hold on India. They want India's billions and they want India's man-power for their imperialistic greed. If we refuse to supply them with men and money, we achieve our goal, namely, swaraj, equality, manliness.

The cup of our humiliation was filled during the closing scenes in the Viceregal Council. Mr. Sastri could not move his resolution on the Punjab. The Indian victims of Jallian-wala received Rs. 1,250, the English victims of mob-frenzy received lakhs. The officials, who were guilty of crimes against those whose servants they were, were reprimanded. And the councillors were satisfied. If India were powerful, India would not have stood this addition of insult to her injury.

I do not blame the British. If we were weak in numbers, as they are, we too would perhaps have resorted to the same methods as they are now employing. Terrorism and deception are weapons not of the strong but of the weak. The British are weak in numbers, we are weak in spite of our numbers. The result is that each is dragging the other down. It is common experience that Englishmen lose in character after residence in India and that Indians lose in courage and manliness by contact with Englishmen. This process of weakening is good neither for us two nations nor for the world.

But if we Indians take care of ourselves, the English and the rest of the world would take care of themselves. Our contribution to the world's progress must therefore consist in setting our own house in order.

Training in arms for the present is out of the question. I go a step further and believe that India has a better mission for the world. It is within her power to show that she can achieve her destiny by pure self-sacrifice, i.e., self-purification. This can be done only by non-co-operation and non-co-operation is possible only when those who commenced to co-operate begin the process of withdrawal. If we can but free ourselves from the threefold *maya* of Government-controlled schools, Government law-courts and legislative councils and truly control our own education, regulate our disputes and be indifferent to their legislation, we are ready to govern ourselves and we are only then ready to ask the Government servants, whether civil or military, to resign and the taxpayers to suspend payment of taxes.

And is it an impracticable proposition to expect parents to withdraw their children from schools and colleges and establish their own institutions, or to ask lawyers to suspend their practice and devote their whole time and attention to national service against payment, where necessary, of their maintenance or to ask candidates for councils not to enter councils and lend their passive or active assistance to the legislative machinery through which all control is exercised? The movement of non-co-operation is nothing but an attempt to isolate the brute force of the British from all the trappings under which it is hidden and to show that brute force by itself cannot for one single moment hold India.

But I frankly confess that until the three conditions mentioned by me are fulfilled, there is no swaraj. We may not go on taking our college degrees, taking thousands of rupees monthly from clients for cases which can be finished in five minutes and taking the keenest delight in wasting the national time on the council floor and still expect to gain

national self-respect.

The last, though not the least, important part of the *maya* still remains to be considered. That is swadeshi. Had we not abandoned swadeshi, we need not have been in the present fallen state. If we would get rid of the economic slavery, we must manufacture our own cloth and at the present moment only by hand-spinning and hand-weaving.

All this means discipline, self-denial, self-sacrifice, organizing ability, confidence, and courage. If we show this in one year among the classes that today count and make public opinion, we certainly gain swaraj within one year. If I am told that even we who lead have not these qualities in us, there certainly will never be swaraj for India but then we shall have no right to blame the English for what they are doing. Our salvation and its time are solely dependent upon us.

Young India, 22-9-1920

TO EVERY ENGLISHMAN IN INDIA

I wish that every Englishman will see this appeal and give thoughtful attention to it.

Let me introduce myself to you. In my humble opinion no Indian has co-operated with the British Government more than I have for an unbroken period of twenty-nine years of public life in the face of circumstances that might well have turned any other man into a rebel. I ask you to believe me when I tell you that my co-operation was not based on the fear of the punishments provided by your laws or any other selfish motives. It was free and voluntary co-operation based on the belief that the sum-total of the British Government was for the benefit of India. I put my life in peril four times for the sake of the Empire—at the time of the Boer War when I was in charge of the Ambulance Corps whose work was mentioned in General Buller's despatches, at the time of the Zulu revolt in Natal when I was in charge of a similar corps, at the time of the commencement of the late War when I raised an Ambulance Corps and as a result of the strenuous training had a severe attack of pleurisy and, lastly, in fulfilment of my promise to Lord Chelmsford at the War Conference in Delhi, I threw myself in such an active recruiting campaign in Kaira District involving long and trying marches that I had an attack of dysentery which proved almost fatal. I did all this in the full belief that acts such as mine must gain for my country an equal status in the Empire. So last December I pleaded hard for a trustful co-operation. I fully believed that Mr. Lloyd George would redeem his promise to the Mussulmans

and that the revelations of the official atrocities in the Punjab would secure full reparation for the Punjabis. But the treachery of Mr. Lloyd George and his appreciation by you, and the condonation of the Punjab atrocities, have completely shattered my faith in the good intentions of the Government and the nation which is supporting it.

But though my faith in your good intentions is gone, I recognize your bravery and I know that you will not yield to justice and reason, you will gladly yield to bravery.

See what this Empire means to India :

Exploitation of India's resources for the benefit of Great Britain.

An ever-increasing military expenditure and a civil service the most expensive in the world.

Extravagant working of every department in utter disregard of India's poverty.

Disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole nation, lest an armed nation might imperil the lives of a handful of you in our midst.

Traffic in intoxicating liquors and drugs for the purpose of sustaining a top-heavy administration.

Progressively representative legislation in order to suppress an ever-growing agitation, seeking to give expression to a nation's agony.

Degrading treatment of Indians residing in your Domi-

nions, and

You have shown total disregard of our feelings by glorifying the Punjab administration and flouting the Mussulman sentiment.

I know you would not mind if we could fight and wrest the sceptre from your hands. You know that we are powerless to do that, for you have ensured our incapacity to fight in open and honourable battle. Bravery on the battlefield is thus impossible for us. Bravery of the soul still remains open to us. I know you will respond to that also. I am engaged in evoking that bravery. Non-co-operation means nothing less than training in self-sacrifice. Why should we co-operate with you when we know that, by your administration of this great country, we are being daily enslaved in an increasing degree. This response of the people to my appeal is not due to my personality. I would like you to dismiss me, and for that matter the Ali Brothers too, from your consideration. My personality will fail to evoke any response to anti-Muslim cry if I were foolish enough to raise it, as the magic name of the Ali Brothers would fail to inspire the Mussalmans with enthusiasm if they were madly to raise an anti-Hindu cry. People flock in their thousands to listen to us, because we today represent voice of a nation groaning under iron heels. The Ali Brothers were your friends as I was, and still am. My religion forbids me to bear any ill-will towards you. I would not raise my hand against you even if I had the power. I expect to conquer you only by my suffering. The Ali Brothers will certainly draw the sword if they could, in defence of their religion and their country. But they and I have made common cause with the people of India in their attempt to voice their feelings and to find a remedy for their distress.

You are in search of a remedy to suppress this rising ebullition of national feeling. I venture to suggest to you that the only way to suppress it is to remove the causes. You have yet the power. You can repent of the wrongs done to Indians. You can compel Mr. Lloyed George to redeem his promises. I assure you he has kept many escape doors. You can compel the Viceroy to retire in favour of a better one, you can revise your ideas about Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer. You can compel the Government to summon a conference of the recognized leaders of the people duly elected by them and representing all shades of opinion so as to devise means for granting swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India.

But this you cannot do unless you consider every Indian to be in reality your equal and brother. I ask for no patronage. I merely point out to you, as a friend, an honourable solution of a grave problem. The other solution, namely, repression, is open to you. I prophesy that it will fail. It has begun already. The Government has already imprisoned two brave men of Panipat for holding and expressing their opinions freely. Another is on his trial in Lahore for having expressed similar opinions. One in the Oudh District is already imprisoned. Another awaits judgment. You should know what is going on in your midst. Our propaganda is being carried on in anticipation of repression. I invite you respectfully to choose the better way and make common cause with the people of India whose salt you are eating. To seek to thwart their aspiration is disloyalty to the country.

‘ONE STEP ENOUGH FOR ME’

Mr. Stokes is a Christian who wants to follow the light that God gives him. He has adopted India as his home. He is watching the non-co-operation movement from the Kotagiri hills where he is living in isolation from the India of the plains, and serving the hillmen. He has contributed three articles on non-co-operation to the columns of the *Servant* of Calcutta and other papers. I had the pleasure of reading them during my Bengal tour. Mr. Stokes approves of non-co-operation but dreads the consequences that may follow complete success, i.e., evacuation of India by the British. He conjures up before his mind a picture of India invaded by the Afghans from the North-West, plundered by the Gurkhas from the Hills. For me I say with Cardinal Newman: ‘I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step enough for me.’ The business is essentially religious. The business of every godfearing man is to dissociate himself from evil in total disregard of consequences. He must have faith in a good deed producing only a good result; that in my opinion is the *Gita* doctrine of work without attachment. God does not permit him to peep into the future. He follows truth, although the following of it may endanger his very life. He knows that it is better to die in the way of God than to live in the way of Satan. Therefore whoever is satisfied that this Government represents the activity of Satan has no choice left to him but to dissociate himself from it.

However, let us consider the worst that can happen to

India on a sudden evacuation of India by the British. What does it matter that the Gurkhas and the Pathans attack us? Surely we would be better able to deal with their violence than we are with the continued violence, moral and physical, perpetrated by the present government. Mr. Stokes does not seem to eschew the use of physical force. Surely the combined labour of the Rajput, the Sikh and the Mussalman warrior in a united India may be trusted to deal with plunders from any or all the sides. Imagine however the worst: Japan overwhelming us from the Bay of Bengal, the Gurkhas from the Hills, and the Pathans from the North-West. If we do not succeed in driving them out, we make terms with them and drive them out at the first opportunity. This will be a more manly course than a helpless submission to an admittedly wrongful State.

But I refuse to contemplate the dismal outlook. If the movement succeeds through non-violent non-co-operation, and that is the supposition Mr. Stokes has started with, the English, whether they remain or retire, they will do so as friends and under a well-ordered agreement as between partners. I still believe in the goodness of human nature, whether it is English or any other. I therefore do not believe that the English will leave in ‘a night’.

And do I consider the Gurkha and the Afghan being incorrigible thieves and robbers without ability to respond to purifying influences? I do not. If India returns to her spirituality, it will react upon the neighbouring tribes; she will interest herself in the welfare of these hardy but poor people, and even support them if necessary, not out of fear but as a matter of neighbourly duty. She will have dealt with Japan simultaneously with the British. Japan will not want to invade India, if India has learnt to consider it a sin

to use a single foreign article that she can manufacture within her own borders. She produces enough to eat, and her men and women can without difficulty manufacture enough cloth to cover their nakedness and protect themselves from heat and cold. We become prey to invasion if we excite the greed of foreign nations by dealing with them under a feeling of dependence on them. We must learn to be independent of everyone of them.

Whether therefore we finally succeed through violence or non-violence, in my opinion, the prospect is by no means so gloomy as Mr. Stokes has imagined. Any conceivable prospect is, in my opinion, less black than the present unmanly and helpless condition. And we cannot do better than follow out fearlessly and with confidence the open and honourable programme of non-violence and sacrifice that we have mapped for ourselves.

Young India, 29-12-1920

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

That unity is strength is not merely a copybook maxim but a rule of life is in no case so clearly illustrated as in the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. Divided we must fall. Any third power may easily enslave India so long as we Hindus and Mussulmans are ready to cut each others' throats. Hindu-Muslim unity means not unity only between Hindus and Mussulmans but between all those who believe India to be their home, no matter to what faith they belong.

I am fully aware that we have not yet attained that unity to such an extent as to bear any strain. It is a daily-growing plant, as yet in delicate infancy, requiring special care and attention. The thing became clear in Nellore when the problem confronted me in a concrete shape. The relations between the two were none too happy. They fought only about two years ago over the question of playing music whilst passing mosques. I hold that we may not dignify every trifle into a matter of deep religious importance. Therefore a Hindu may not insist on playing music whilst passing a mosque. He may not even quote precedents in his own or any other place for the sake of playing music. It is not a matter of vital importance for him to play music whilst passing a mosque. One can easily appreciate the Mussulman sentiment of having solemn silence near a mosque the whole of the twenty-four hours. What is a non-essential to a Hindu may be an essential to a Mussalman. And in all non-essential matters a Hindu must yield for the asking. It is criminal folly to

quarrel over trivialities. The unity we desire will last only if we cultivate a yielding and a charitable disposition towards one another. The cow is as dear as life to a Hindu; the Mussulman should therefore voluntarily accommodate his Hindu brother. Silence at his prayer is a precious thing for a Mussulman. Every Hindu should voluntarily respect his Mussulman's brother's sentiment. This however is a counsel of perfection. There are nasty Hindus as there are nasty Mussulmans who would pick a quarrel for nothing. For these we must provide panchayats of unimpeachable probity and imperturbability whose decisions must be binding on both parties. Public opinion should be cultivated in favour of the decisions of such panchayats so that no one would question them.

I know that there is much too much distrust of one another as yet. Many Hindus distrust Mussulman honesty. They believe that swaraj means Mussulman raj, for they argue that without the British, Mussulmans of India will aid Mussulman power to build a Mussulman empire in India. Mussulmans on the other hand fear that the Hindus, being in an overwhelming majority, will smother them. Such an attitude of mind betokens impotence on either's part. If not their nobility, their desire to live in peace would dictate a policy of mutual trust and forbearance. There is nothing in either religion to keep the two apart. The days of forcible conversion are gone. Save for the cow, Hindus can have no ground for quarrel with Mussulmans. The latter are under no religious obligation to slaughter a cow. The fact is we have never before now endeavoured to come together to adjust our differences and to live as friends bound to one another as children of the same sacred soil. We have both now an opportunity of a lifetime. The Khilafat

question will not recur for another hundred years. If the Hindus wish to cultivate eternal friendship with the Mussulmans, they must perish with them in the attempt to vindicate the honour of Islam.

Young India, 11-5-1921

THE POET'S ANXIETY

The Poet of Asia, as Lord Hardinge called Dr. Tagore, is fast becoming, if he has not already become, the Poet of the world. Increasing prestige has brought to him increasing responsibility. His greatest service to India must be his poetic interpretation of India's message to the world. The Poet is therefore sincerely anxious that India should deliver no false or feeble message in her name. He is naturally jealous of his country's reputation. He says he has striven hard to find himself in tune with the present movement. He confesses that he is baffled. He can find nothing for his lyre in the din and the bustle of non-co-operation. In three forceful letters he has endeavoured to give expression to his misgivings, and he has come to the conclusion that non-co-operation is not dignified enough for the India of his vision, that it is a doctrine of negation and despair. He fears that it is a doctrine of separation, exclusiveness, narrowness and negation.

No Indian can feel anything but pride in the Poet's exquisite jealousy of India's honour. It is good that he should have sent to us his misgivings in language at once beautiful and clear.

In all humility I shall endeavour to answer the Poet's doubts. I may fail to convince him or the reader who may have been touched by his eloquence, but I would like to assure him and India that non-co-operation in conception is not any of the things he fears, and he need have no cause to be

ashamed of his country for having adopted non-co-operation. If in actual application it appears in the end to have failed, it will be no more the fault of the doctrine than it would be of Truth if those who claim to apply it in practice do not appear to succeed. Non-co-operation may have come in advance of its time. India and the world must then wait, but there is no choice for India save between violence and non-co-operation.

Nor need the Poet fear that non-co-operation is intended to erect a Chinese Wall between India and the West. On the contrary, non-co-operation is intended to pave the way to real, honourable and voluntary co-operation based on mutual respect and trust. The present struggle is being waged against compulsory co-operation, against one-sided combination, against the armed imposition of modern methods of exploitation masquerading under the name of civilization.

Non-co-operation is a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation in evil.

The Poet's concern is largely about the student. He is of opinion that they should not have been called upon to give up Government schools before they had other schools to go to. Here I must differ from him. I have never been able to make a fetish of literary training. My experience has proved to my satisfaction that literary training by itself adds not an inch to one's moral height and that character-building is independent of literary training. I am firmly of opinion that the Government schools have unmanned us, rendered us helpless and godless. They have filled us with discontent, and, providing no remedy for the discontent, have made us despondent. They have made us what we were intended to become—clerks and interpreters. A government builds its prestige upon the

apparently voluntary association of the governed. And if it was wrong to co-operate with the Government in keeping us slaves, we were bound to begin with those institutions in which our association appeared to be most voluntary. The youth of a nation are its hope. I hold that as soon as we discovered that the system of government was wholly, or mainly, evil, it became sinful for us to associate our children with it.

It is no argument against the soundness of the proposition laid down by me, that the vast majority of the students went back after the first flush of enthusiasm. Their recantation is proof rather of the extent of our degradation than of the wrongness of the step. Experience has shown that the establishment of national schools has not resulted in drawing many more students. The strongest and the truest of them came out without any national schools to fall back upon, and I am convinced that these first withdrawals are rendering service of the highest order.

But the Poet's protest against the calling out of the boys is really a corollary to his objection to the very doctrine of non-co-operation. He has a horror of everything negative. His whole soul seems to rebel against the negative commandments of religion. I must give his objection in his own inimitable language. "R. in support of the present movement has often said to me that passion for rejection is a stronger power in the beginning than the acceptance of an ideal. Though I know it to be a fact, I cannot take it as truth. *Brahmavidya* in India has for its object *mukti*, emancipation, while Buddhism has *nirvana*, extinction. *Mukti* draws our attention to the positive and *nirvana* to the negative side of truth. Therefore, he emphasized the fact of *dukha*, misery which had to be avoided and the *Brahmavidya* emphasized the fact of *ananda*, joy which had to be attained." In these and kindred

passages, the reader will find the key to the Poet's mentality. In my humble opinion, rejection is as much an ideal as the acceptance of a thing. It is as necessary to reject untruth as it is to accept truth. All religions teach that two opposite forces act upon us and that the human endeavour consists in a series of eternal rejections and acceptances. Non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as co-operation with good. I venture to suggest that the Poet has done an unconscious injustice to Buddhism in describing *nirvana* as merely a negative state. I make bold to say that *mukti*, emancipation, is as much a negative state as *nirvana*. Emancipation from or extinction of the bondage of the flesh leads to *ananda* (eternal bliss). Let me close this part of my argument by drawing attention to the fact that the final word of the Upanishads (*Brahmavidya*) is Not. *Neti* was the best description the authors of the Upanishads were able to find for Brahman.

I therefore think that the Poet has been unnecessarily alarmed at the negative aspect of non-co-operation. We had lost the power of saying "no". It had become disloyal almost sacrilegious, to say "no" to the Government. This deliberate refusal to co-operate is like the necessary weeding process that a cultivator has to resort to before he sows. Weeding is as necessary to agriculture as sowing. Indeed, even whilst the crops are growing, the weeding fork, as every husbandman knows, is an instrument almost of daily use. The nation's non-co-operation is an invitation to the Government to co-operate with it on its own terms as is every nation's right and every good government's duty. Non-co-operation is the nation's notice that it is no longer satisfied to be in tutelage. The nation has taken to the harmless (for it), natural and religious doctrine of non-co-operation in the place of the unnatural and irreligious doctrine of violence. And if India is ever to attain the swaraj of the Poet's dream, she will do so

only by non-violent non-co-operation. Let him deliver his message of peace to the world, and feel confident that India through her non-co-operation, if she remains true to her pledge, will have exemplified his message. Non-co-operation is intended to give the very meaning to patriotism that the Poet is yearning after. An India prostrate at the feet of Europe can give no hope to humanity. An India awakened and free has a message of peace and goodwill to a groaning world. Non-co-operation is designed to supply her with a platform from which she will preach the message.

Young India, 1-6-1921

A CONFESSION OF FAITH

A strange anonymous letter has been received by me, admiring me for having taken up a cause that was dearest to Lokamanya's heart, and telling me that his spirit was residing in me and that I must prove a worthy follower of his. The letter, moreover, admonishes me not to lose heart in the prosecution of the swaraj programme, and finishes off by accusing me of imposture in claiming to be politically a disciple of Gokhale. I wish correspondents will throw off the slavish habit of writing anonymously. We, who are developing the swaraj spirit, must cultivate the courage of fearlessly speaking out our mind. The subject-matter of the letter, however, being of public importance, demands a reply. I cannot claim the honour of being a follower of the late Lokamanya. I admire him like millions of his countrymen for his indomitable will, his vast learning, his love of country, and, above all, the purity of his private life and great sacrifice. Of all the men of modern times, he captivated most the imagination of his people. He breathed into us the spirit of swaraj. No one perhaps realized the evil of the existing system of Government as Mr. Tilak did. And in all humility I claim to deliver his message to the country as truly as the best of his disciples. But I am conscious that my method is not Mr. Tilak's method and that is why I have still difficulty with some of the Maharashtra leaders. But I sincerely think that Mr. Tilak did not disbelieve in my method. I enjoyed the privilege of his confidence. And his last word to me in the presence of several friends was just a fortnight before his death, that mine was an excellent

method if the people could be persuaded to take to it. But he said he had doubts. I know no other method. I can only hope that when the final test comes, the country will be proved to have assimilated the method of non-violent non-co-operation. Nor am I unaware of my other limitations. I can lay no claim to scholarship. I have not his powers of organization, I have no compact disciplined party to lead, and having been an exile for 23 years, I cannot claim the experience that the Lokamanya had of India. Two things we had in common to the fullest measure : love of country and the steady pursuit of swaraj. I can therefore, assure the anonymous writer that, yielding to none in my reverence for the memory of the deceased, I will march side by side with the foremost of the Lokamanya's disciples in the pursuit of swaraj. I know that the only offering acceptable to him is the quickest attainment of swaraj by India. That and nothing else can give his spirit peace.

Discipleship, however, is a sacred personal matter. I fell at Dadabhai's feet in 1888, but he seemed to be too far away from me. I could be as son to him, not disciple. A disciple is more than a son. Discipleship is a second birth. It is a voluntary surrender. In 1896 I met almost all the known leaders of India in connection with my South African mission. Justice Ranade awed me. I could hardly talk in his presence. Badruddin Tyabji fathered me, and asked me to be guided by Ranade and Pherozeshah. The latter became a patron. His will had to be law. "You must address a public meeting on the 26th September, and you must be punctual." I obeyed. On the 25th evening I was to wait on him. I did.

"Have you written out your speech?" he inquired.

“No, Sir.”

“That won’t do, young man. Can you write it out tonight ?”

“Munshi, you must go to Mr. Gandhi and receive the manuscript from him. It must be printed overnight and you must send me a copy.” Turning to me, he added : “Gandhi, you must not write a long speech, you do not know Bombay audiences cannot stand long addresses.” I bowed.

The lion of Bombay taught me to take orders. He did not make me his disciple. He did not even try.

I went thence to Poona, I was an utter stranger. My host first took me to Mr. Tilak. I met him surrounded by his companions. He listened, and said : “We must arrange a meeting for you. But perhaps you do not know that we have unfortunately two parties. You must give us a non-party man as chairman. Will you see Dr. Bhandarkar ?” I consented and retired. I have no firm impression of Mr. Tilak, except to recall that he shook off my nervousness by his affectionate familiarity. I went thence, I think, to Gokhale, and then to Dr. Bhandarkar. The latter greeted me as a teacher his pupil.

“You seem to be an earnest and enthusiastic young man. Many people do not come to see me at this the hottest part of the day. I never nowadays attend public meetings. But you have recited such a pathetic story that I must make an exception in your favour.”

I worshipped the venerable doctor with his wise face.

But I could not find for him a place on that little throne. It was still unoccupied. I had many heroes but no king.

It was different with Gokhale. I cannot say why. I met him at his quarters on the college ground. It was like meeting an old friend, or better still, a mother after a long separation. His gentle face put me at ease in a moment. His minute inquiries about myself and my doings in South Africa at once enshrined him in my heart. And as I parted from him, I said to myself: "You are my man." And from that moment Gokhale never lost sight of me. In 1901 on my second return from South Africa, we came closer still. He simply "took me in hand", and began to fashion me. He was concerned about how I spoke, dressed, walked and ate. My mother was not more solicitous about me than Gokhale. There was so far as I am aware, no reserve between us. It was really a case of love at first sight, and it stood the severest strain in 1913. He seemed to me all I wanted as a political worker—pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault. It does not matter to me that he may not have been any of these things. It was enough for me, that I could discover no fault in him to cavil at. He was and remains for me the most perfect man on the political field. Not, therefore, that we had no differences. We differed even in 1901 in our views on social customs, e.g., widow re-marriage. We discovered differences in our estimate of Western civilization. He frankly differed from me in my extreme views on non-violence. But these differences mattered neither to him nor to me. Nothing could put us asunder. It were blasphemous to conjecture what would have happened if he were alive today. I know that I would have been working under him. I have made this confession, because the anonymous letter hurt me, when it accused me of imposture about my political discipleship.

Had I been remiss in my acknowledgment to him who is now dumb ? I thought, I must declare my faithfulness to Gokhale, especially when I seemed to be living in a camp which the Indian world calls opposite.

Young India, 13-7-1921

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Civil disobedience was on the lips of every one of the members of the All-India Congress Committee. Not having really ever tried it, everyone appeared to be enamoured of it from a mistaken belief in it as a sovereign remedy for our present-day ills. I feel sure that it can be made such if we can produce the necessary atmosphere for it. For individuals there always is that atmosphere except when their civil disobedience is certain to lead to bloodshed. I discovered this exception during the satyagraha days. But even so a call may come which one dare not neglect, cost it what it may. I can clearly see that time is coming to me when I must refuse obedience to every single State-made law, even though there may be a certainty of bloodshed. When neglect of the call means a denial of God, civil disobedience becomes a peremptory duty.

Mass civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It can only be tried in a calm atmosphere. It must be the calmness of strength not weakness, knowledge not ignorance. Individual civil disobedience may be and often is vicarious. Mass civil disobedience may be and often is selfish in the sense that individuals expect personal gain from their disobedience. Thus, in South Africa, Kallenbach and Polak offered vicarious civil disobedience. They had nothing to gain. Thousands offered it because they expected personal gain also in the shape, say, of the removal of the annual poll-tax levied upon ex-indentured men and their wives and grown-up children. It is sufficient in mass civil disobedience if the resisters under-

stand the working of the doctrine.

It was in a practically uninhabited tract of country that I was arrested* in South Africa when I was marching into prohibited area with over two to three thousand men and some women. The company included several Pathans and others who were able-bodied men. It was the greatest testimony of merit the Government of South Africa gave to the movement. They knew that we were as harmless as we were determined. It was easy enough for that body of men to cut to pieces those who arrested me. It would have not only been a most cowardly thing to do, but it would have been a treacherous breach of their own pledge, and it would have meant ruin to the struggle for freedom and the forcible deportation of every Indian from South Africa. But the men were no rabble. They were disciplined soldiers and all the better for being unarmed. Though I was torn from them, they did not disperse, nor did they turn back. They marched on to their destination till they were, every one of them, arrested and imprisoned. So far as I am aware, this was one instance of discipline and non-violence for which there is no parallel in history. Without such restraint, I see no hope of successful mass civil disobedience here.

We must dismiss the idea of overawing the Government by huge demonstrations every time someone is arrested. On the contrary we must treat arrest as the normal condition of the life of a non-co-operator. For we must seek arrest and imprisonment as a soldier who goes to a battle to seek death. We expect to bear down the opposition of the Government by courting and not by avoiding imprisonment, even though it be by showing our supposed readiness to be arrested and

* On November 6, 1913

imprisoned. Civil disobedience then emphatically means our desire to surrender to a single unarmed policeman. Our triumph consists in thousands being led to the prisons like lambs to the slaughterhouse. If the lambs of the world had been willingly led, they had long ago saved themselves from the butcher's knife. Our triumph consists again in being imprisoned for no wrong whatever. The greater our innocence the greater our strength and the swifter our victory.

As it is, this Government is cowardly, we are afraid of imprisonment. The Government takes advantage of our fear of jails. If only our men and women welcome jails as health-resorts, we will cease to worry about the dear ones put in jails which our countrymen in South Africa need to nickname His Majesty's Hotels.

We have too long been mentally disobedient to the laws of the State and have too often surreptitiously evaded them, to be fixed all of a sudden for civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil has to be open and non-violent.

Complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion—a refusal to obey every single State-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardship. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficacy of innocent suffering. By noiselessly going to prison a civil resister ensures a calm atmosphere. The wrongdoer wearies of wrongdoing in the absence of resistance. All pleasure is lost when the victim betrays no resistance. A full grasp of the conditions of successful civil resistance is necessary at least on the part of the representatives of the people before we can launch on an enterprise of such magnitude. The quickest remedies are always fraught

with the greatest danger and require the utmost skill in handling them. It is my firm conviction that if we bring about a successful boycott of foreign cloth, we shall have produced an atmosphere that would enable us to inaugurate civil disobedience on a scale that no Government can resist. I would, therefore, urge patience and determined concentration on swadeshi upon those who are impatient to embark on mass civil disobedience.

Young India, 4-8-1921

APPEAL TO THE WOMEN OF INDIA

Dear Sisters,

The All-India Congress Committee has come to a momentous decision in fixing the 30th September next as the final date for completing the boycott of foreign cloth begun by the sacrificial fire lit on the 31st July in Bombay in memory of Lokamanya Tilak. I was accorded the privilege of setting fire to the huge pile containing costly saris and other dresses which you have hitherto considered fine and beautiful. I feel that it was right and wise on the part of the sisters who gave their costly clothing. Its destruction was the most economical use you could have made of it, even as destruction of plague-infected articles is their most economical and best use. It was a necessary surgical operation designed to avert more serious complaints in the body politic.

The women of India have during the past twelve months worked wonders on behalf of the Motherland. You have silently worked away as angels of mercy. You have parted with your cash and your fine jewellery. You have wandered from house to house to make collections. Some of you have even assisted in picketing. Some of you who were used to fine dresses of variegated colours and had a number of changes during the day, have now adopted the white and spotless but heavy khadi sari reminding one of a woman's innate purity. You have done all this for the sake of India, for the sake of the Khilafat, for the sake of the Punjab. There is no guile about your word or work. Yours is the purest sacrifice

untainted by anger or hate. Let me confess to you that your spontaneous and loving response all over India has convinced me that God is with us. No other proof of our struggle being one of self-purification is needed than that lakhs of India's women are actively helping it.

Having given much, more is now required of you. Men bore the principal share of the subscriptions to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. But completion of the swadeshi programme is possible only if you give the largest share. Boycott is impossible unless you will surrender the whole of your foreign clothing. So long as the taste persists so long is complete renunciation impossible. And boycott means complete renunciation. We must be prepared to be satisfied with such cloth as India can produce, even as we are thankfully content with such children as God gives us. I have not known a mother throwing away her baby, even though it may appear ugly to an outsider. So should it be with the patriotic women of India about Indian manufactures. And for you only hand-spun and hand-woven can be regarded as Indian manufactures. During the transition stage you can only get coarse khadi in abundance. You may add all the art to it that your taste allows or requires. And if you will be satisfied with coarse khadi for a few months, India need not despair of seeing a revival of the fine, rich and coloured garments of old, which were once the envy and the despair of the world. I assure you that a six months' course of self-denial will show you that what we today regard as artistic is only falsely so, and that true art takes note not merely of form but also of what lies behind. There is an art that kills and an art that gives life. The fine fabric that we have imported from the West or the Far East has literally killed millions of our brothers and sisters and delivered thousands of our dear sisters to a life of shame. True art must be evidence of happiness, contentment

and purity of its authors. And if you will have such art revived in our midst, the use of khadi is obligatory on the best of you at the present moment.

And not only is the use of khadi necessary for the success of the swadeshi programme but it is imperative for every one of you to spin during your leisure hours. I have suggested to boys and men also that they should spin. Thousands of them, I know, are spinning daily. But the main burden of spinning must, as of old, fall on your shoulders. Two hundred years ago the women of India spun not only for home demand but also for foreign lands. They spun not merely coarsecounts but the finest that the world has ever spun. No machine has yet reached the fineness of the yarn spun by our ancestors. If, then, we are to cope with the demand for khadi during the two months and afterwards, you must form spinning clubs, institute spinning competitions and flood the Indian market with hand-spun yarn. For this purpose some of you have to become experts in spinning, carding, and adjusting the spinning-wheels. This means ceaseless toil. You will not look upon spinning as a means of livelihood. For the middle class it should supplement the income of the family, and for very poor women, it is undoubtedly a means of livelihood. The spinning-wheel should be, as it was, the widow's loving companion. But for you who will read this appeal, it is presented as a duty, as dharma. If all the well-to-do women of India were to spin a certain quantity daily, they would make yarn cheap and bring about much more quickly than otherwise the required fineness.

The economic and the moral salvation of India thus rests mainly with you. The future of India lies on your knees, for you will nurture the future generation. You can bring up the children of India to become simple, godfearing, and

brave men and women, or you can coddle them to be weaklings unfit to brave the storms of life and used to foreign fineries which they would find it difficult in after life to discard. The next few weeks will show of what stuff the women of India are made. I have not the shadow of a doubt as to your choice. The destiny of India is far safer in your hands than in the hands of a Government that has so exploited India's resources that she has lost faith in herself. At every one of women's meetings, I have asked for your blessings for the national effort and I have done so in the belief that you are pure, simple, and godly enough to give them with effect. You can ensure the fruitfulness of your blessings by giving up your foreign cloth and during your spare hours ceaselessly spinning for the nation.

I remain,
Your devoted brother,
M. K. GANDHI

Young India, 11-8-1921

TAMPERING WITH LOYALTY*

His Excellency the Governor of Bombay had warned the public some time ago, that he "meant business", that he was no longer going to tolerate the speeches that were being made. In his note on the Ali Brothers and others he made clear his meaning. The Ali Brothers are to be charged with having tampered with the loyalty of the sepoy and with having uttered sedition. I must confess, that I was not prepared for the revelation of such hopeless ignorance on the part of the Governor of Bombay. It is evident that he has not followed the course of Indian history during the past twelve months. He evidently does not know that the National Congress began to tamper with the loyalty of the sepoy in September last year, that the Central Khilafat Committee began it earlier and that I began it earlier still, for I must be permitted to take the credit or the odium of suggesting that India had a right openly to tell the sepoy and everyone who served the Government in any capacity whatsoever, that he participated in the wrongs done by the Government. The Conference at Karachi merely repeated the Congress declaration in terms of Islam. Only a Mussulman divine can speak for Islam, but speaking for Hinduism and speaking for nationalism, I have no hesitation in saying, that it is sinful for anyone, either as soldier or civilian, to serve this Government which has proved treacherous to the Mussulmans of India and which has been guilty of the

*This was one of the three articles for which Gandhiji was sentenced to six years imprisonment in March 1922.

inhumanities of the Punjab. I have said this from many a platform in the presence of sepoy. And if I have not asked individual sepoys to come out, it has not been due to want of will but of ability to support them. I have not hesitated to tell the sepoy, that if he could leave the service and support himself without the Congress or the Khilafat aid, he should leave at once. And I promise that as soon as the spinning-wheel finds an abiding place in every home and Indians begin to feel that weaving gives anybody any day an honourable livelihood, I shall not hesitate, at the peril of being shot, to ask the Indian sepoy individually to leave his service and become a weaver. For, has not the sepoy been used to hold India under subjection, has he not been used to murder innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh, has he not been used to drive away innocent men, women and children during that dreadful night at Chandpur, has he not been used to subjugate the proud Arab of Mesopotamia, has he not been utilized to crush the Egyptian? How can any Indian having a spark of humanity in him and any Mussulman having any pride in his religion feel otherwise than as the Ali Brothers have done? The sepoy has been used more often as a hired assassin than as a soldier defending the liberty or the honour of the weak and the helpless. The Governor has pandered to the basest in us by telling us what would have happened in Malabar but for the British soldier or sepoy. I venture to inform His Excellency, the Malabar Hindus would have fared better without the British bayonets, that Hindus and Mussulmans would have jointly appeased the Moplahs, that possibly there being no Khilafat question there would have been no Moplah riot at all, that at the worst supposing that Mussulmans had made common cause with the Moplahs, Hinduism would have relied upon its creed of non-violence and turned every Mussulman into a friend, or Hindu valour would have been tested and tried.

The Governor of Bombay has done a disservice to himself and his cause (whatever it might be), by fomenting Hindu-Muslim disunion, and has insulted the Hindus, by letting them infer from his note, that Hindus are helpless creatures unable to die for or defend their hearth, home or religion. If however the Governor is right in his assumptions, the sooner the Hindus die out, the better for humanity. But let me remind His Excellency that he has pronounced the greatest condemnation upon British rule, in that it finds Indians today devoid of enough manliness to defend themselves against looters, whether they are Moplah Mussulmans or infuriated Hindus of Arrah.

His Excellency's reference to the sedition of the Ali Brothers is only less unpardonable than his reference to the tampering. For he must know that sedition has become the creed of the Congress. Every non-co-operator is pledged to preach disaffection towards the Government established by law. Non-co-operation, though a religious and strictly moral movement, deliberately aims at the overthrow of the Government, and therefore legally seditious in terms of the Indian Penal Code. But this is no new discovery. Lord Chelmsford knew it. Lord Reading knows it. It is unthinkable that the Governor of Bombay does not know it. It was common cause that so long as the movement remained non-violent, nothing would be done to interfere with it.

But it may be urged that the Government has a right to change its policy when it finds that the movement is really threatening its very existence as a system. I do not deny its right. I object to the Governor's note, because it is so worded as to let the unknowing public think that tampering with the loyalty of the sepoy and sedition were fresh crimes committed by the Ali Brothers and brought for

the first time to His Excellency's notice.

However the duty of the Congress and Khilafat workers is clear. We ask for no quarter; we expect none from the Government. We did not solicit the promise of immunity from prison so long as we remained non-violent. We may not now complain if we are imprisoned for sedition. Therefore our self-respect and our pledge require us to remain calm, unperturbed and non-violent. We have our appointed course to follow. We must reiterate from a thousand platforms the formula of the Ali Brothers regarding the sepoys, and we must spread disaffection openly and systematically till it pleases the Government to arrest us. And this we must do, not by way of angry retaliation, but because it is our dharma. We must wear khadi even as the Brothers have worn it, and spread the gospel of swadeshi. The Mussulmans must collect for Smyrna relief and the Angora Government. We must spread like the Ali Brothers the gospel of Hindu-Muslim unity and of non-violence for the purpose of attaining swaraj and the redress of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs.

We have almost reached the crisis. It is well with a patient who survives a crisis. If on the one hand we remain firm as a rock in the presence of danger, and on the other observe the greatest self-restraint, we shall certainly attain our end this very year.

HINDUISM

In dealing with the problem of untouchability during the Madras tour, I have asserted my claim to being a Sanatani Hindu with greater emphasis than hitherto, and yet there are things which are commonly done in the name of Hinduism which I disregard. I have no desire to be called a Sanatani Hindu or any other, if I am not such. And I have certainly no desire to steal in a reform or an abuse under cover of a great faith.

It is therefore necessary for me once for all distinctly to give my meaning of Sanatana Hinduism. The word Sanatana is used in its natural sense.

I call myself a Sanatani Hindu, because,

(1) I believe in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name of Hindu scriptures, and therefore in *avatars* and rebirth,

(2) I believe in the Varnashrama dharma in a sense in my opinion strictly Vedic, but not in its present popular and crude sense,

(3) I believe in the protection of the cow in its much larger sense than the popular,

(4) I do not disbelieve in idol-worship.

The reader will note that I have purposely refrained from using the word divine origin in reference to the Vedas or any other scriptures. For I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe the Bible, the Koran, and the Zend Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired. Nor do I claim to have any first-hand knowledge of these wonderful books. But I do claim to know and feel the truths of the essential teaching of the scriptures. I decline to be bound by any interpretation however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense. I do most emphatically repudiate the claim (if they advance any such) of the present Shankaracharyas and Shastris to give a correct interpretation of the Hindu scriptures. On the contrary, I believe that our present knowledge of these books is in a most chaotic state. I believe implicitly in the Hindu aphorism that no one truly knows the Shastras who has not attained perfection in Innocence (ahimsa), Truth (*satya*) and Self-control (*brahmacharya*) and who has not renounced all acquisition or possession of wealth. I believe in the institution of gurus, but in this age millions must go without a guru, because it is a rare thing to find a combination of perfect purity and perfect learning. But one need not despair of ever knowing the truth of one's religion, because the fundamentals of Hinduism as of every great religion are unchangeable, and easily understood. Every Hindu believes in God and his Oneness, in rebirth and salvation. But that which distinguishes Hinduism from every other religion is its cow-protection, more than its Varnashrama.

Varnashrama is, in my opinion, inherent in human nature, and Hinduism has simply reduced it to a science. It does attach to birth. A man cannot change his varna by choice. Not to abide by one's varna is to disregard the law

of heredity. The division, however, into innumerable castes is an unwarranted liberty taken with the doctrine. The four divisions are all-sufficing.

I do not believe that interdining or even intermarriage necessarily deprives a man of his status that his birth has given him. The four divisions define a man's calling, they do not restrict or regulate social intercourse. The divisions define duties, they confer no privileges. It is, I hold, against the genius of Hinduism to arrogate to oneself a higher status or assign to another a lower. All are born to serve God's creation, a Brahmin with his knowledge, a Kshatriya with his power of protection, a Vaishya with his commercial ability and a Shudra with bodily labour. This, however, does not mean that a Brahmin for instance is absolved from bodily labour, or the duty of protecting himself and others. His birth makes a Brahmin predominantly a man of knowledge, the fittest by heredity and training to impart it to others. There is nothing, again, to prevent the Shudra from acquiring all the knowledge he wishes. Only, he will best serve with his body and need not envy others their special qualities for service. But a Brahmin who claims superiority by right of knowledge falls and has no knowledge. And so with the others who pride themselves upon their special qualities. Varnashrama is self-restraint and conservation and economy of energy.

Though therefore Varnashrama is not affected by interdining or intermarriage, Hinduism does most emphatically discourage interdining and intermarriage between divisions. Hinduism reached the highest limit of self-restraint. It is undoubtedly a religion of renunciation of the flesh, so that the spirit may be set free. It is no part of a Hindu's duty to dine with his son. And by restricting his choice of a bride to a

particular group, he exercises rare self-restraint. Hinduism does not regard a married state as by any means essential for salvation. Marriage is a "fall" even as birth is a "fall". Salvation is freedom from birth and hence death also. Prohibition against intermarriage and interdining is essential for a rapid evolution of the soul. But this self-denial is no test of varna. A Brahmin may remain a Brahmin, though he may dine with his Shudra brother, if he has not left off his duty of service by knowledge. It follows from what I have said above, that restraint in matters of marriage and dining is not based upon notions of superiority. A Hindu who refuses to dine with another from a sense of superiority misrepresents his dharma.

Unfortunately today Hinduism seems to consist merely in eating and not eating. Once I horrified a pious Hindu by taking toast at a Mussulman's house. I saw that he was pained to see me pouring milk into a cup handed by a Mussulman friend, but his anguish knew no bounds when he saw me taking toast at the Mussulman's hands. Hinduism is in danger of losing its substance, if it resolves itself into a matter of elaborate rules as to what and with whom to eat. Abstemiousness from intoxicating drinks and drugs, and from all kinds of foods, especially meat, is undoubtedly a great aid to the evolution of the spirit, but it is by no means an end in itself. Many a man eating meat and with everybody, but living in the fear of God is nearer his freedom than a man religiously abstaining from meat and many other things, but blaspheming God in every one of his acts.

The central fact of Hinduism however is cow-protection. Cow-protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in all human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human

world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. The cow is a poem of pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is speechless. Cow-protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow.

The way to protect is to die for her. It is a denial of Hinduism and ahimsa to kill a human being to protect a cow. Hindus are enjoined to protect the cow by their *tapasya*, by self-purification, by self-sacrifice. The present-day cow-protection has degenerated into a perpetual feud with the Mussulmans, whereas cow-protection means conquering the Mussulmans by our love. A Mussulman friend sent me some time ago a book detailing the inhumanities practised by us on the cow and her progeny; how we bleed her to take the last drop of milk from her, how we starve her to emaciation, how we ill-treat the calves, how we deprive them of their portion of milk, how cruelly we treat the oxen, how we overload them. If they had speech, they would bear witness to our crimes against them which would stagger the world. By every act of cruelty to our cattle, we disown God and Hinduism. I do not know that the condition of the cattle in any other part of the world is so bad as in unhappy India. We may not blame the Englishman for this. We may not plead poverty in our defence. Criminal negligence is the only cause of the miserable condition of our cattle. Our *pinjra*-

poles, though they are an answer to our instinct of mercy, are a clumsy demonstration of its execution. Instead of being model dairy farms and great profitable national institutions, they are merely depots for receiving decrepit cattle.

Hindus will be judged not by their *tilaks*, not by the correct chanting of *mantras*, not by their most punctilious observance of caste rules but by their ability to protect the cow. Whilst professing the religion of cow-protection, we have enslaved the cow and her progeny, and have become slaves ourselves.

It will now be understood why I consider myself a Sanatani Hindu. I yield to none in my regard for the cow. I have made the Khilafat cause my own, because I see that through its preservation full protection can be secured for the cow. I do not ask my Mussulman friends to save the cow in consideration of my service. My prayer ascends daily to God Almighty, that my service of a cause I hold to be just may appear so pleasing to Him that He may change the hearts of the Mussulmans, and fill them with pity for their Hindu neighbours and make them save the animal the latter hold dear as life itself.

I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults; I daresay, she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations. Nothing elates me so much as the music of the *Gita* or the *Ramayana* by Tulsidas, the only two books in Hinduism I may be said to know. When I fancied I was taking my last breath, the *Gita* was my solace. I know the vice that is going on today in all the great Hindu

shrines, but I love them in spite of their unspeakable failings. There is an interest which I take in them and which I take in no other. I am a reformer through and through. But my zeal never takes me to the rejection of any of the essential things of Hinduism. I have said I do not disbelieve in idol worship. An idol does not excite any feeling of veneration in me. But I think that idol worship is part of human nature. We hanker after symbolism. Why should one be more composed in a church than elsewhere? Images are an aid to worship. No Hindu considers an image to be God. I do not consider idol worship a sin.

It is clear from the foregoing, that Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In it there is room for the worship of all the prophets of the world. It has no doubt absorbed many tribes in its fold, but this absorption has been of an evolutionary, imperceptible character. Hinduism tells everyone to worship God according to his own faith or dharma, and so it lives at peace with all the religions.

That being my conception of Hinduism, I have never been able to reconcile myself to untouchability. I have always regarded it as an excrescence. It is true that it has been handed down to us from generations, but so are many evil practices even to this day. I should be ashamed to think that dedication of girls to virtual prostitution was a part of Hinduism. Yet it is practised by Hindus in many parts of India. I consider it positive irreligion to sacrifice goats to Kali and do not consider it a part of Hinduism. Hinduism is a growth of ages. The very name, Hinduism, was given to the religion of the people of Hindustan by foreigners. There was no doubt at one time sacrifice of animals offered in the name of religion. But it is not religion, much less is it Hindu religion. And so also, it seems to me that when cow-protec-

tion became an article of faith with our ancestors, those who persisted in eating beef were excommunicated. The civil strife must have been fierce. Social boycott was applied not only to the recalcitrants, but their sins were visited upon their children also. The practice which had probably its origin in good intentions hardened into usage, and even verses crept in our sacred books giving the practice a permanence wholly undeserved and still less justified. Whether my theory is correct or not, untouchability is repugnant to reason and to the instinct of mercy, pity or love. A religion that establishes the worship of the cow cannot possibly countenance or warrant a cruel and inhuman boycott of human beings. And I should be content to be torn to pieces rather than disown the suppressed classes. Hindus will certainly never deserve freedom, nor get it, if they allow their noble religion to be disgraced by the retention of the taint of untouchability. And as I love Hinduism dearer than life itself, the taint has become for me an intolerable burden. Let us not deny God by denying to a fifth of our race the right of association on an equal footing.

Young India, 6-10-1921

THE GREAT SENTINEL

The Bard of Shantiniketan has contributed to the *Modern Review* * a brilliant essay on the present movement. It is a series of word pictures which he alone can paint. It is an eloquent protest against authority, slave mentality or whatever description one gives of blind acceptance of a passing mania whether out of fear or hope. It is a welcome and wholesome reminder to all workers that we must not impose authority no matter how great. The Poet tells us summarily to reject anything and everything that does not appeal to our reason or heart. If we would gain swaraj, we must stand for Truth as we know it at any cost. A reformer who is enraged because his message is not accepted, must retire to the forest to learn how to watch, wait, and pray. With all this one must heartily agree, and the Poet deserves the thanks of his countrymen for standing up for Truth and Reason. There is no doubt that our last state will be worse than our first if we surrender our reason into somebody's keeping. And I would feel extremely sorry to discover that the country had unthinkingly and blindly followed all I had said or done. I am quite conscious of the fact that blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for that of love. Love is needed to strengthen the weak, love becomes tyrannical when it extracts obedience from an unbeliever. To mutter a *mantra* without knowing its value is unmanly. It is good therefore that the

*Of October, 1921

Poet has invited all who are slavishly mimicking the call of the charkha boldly to declare their revolt. His essay serves as warning to us all who, in our impatience, are betrayed into intolerance or even violence against those who differ from us. I regard the Poet as a sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called Bigotry, Lethargy, Intolerance, Ignorance, Inertia, and other members of that brood.

But whilst I agree with all that the Poet has said as to the necessity of watchfulness lest we cease to think, I must not be understood to endorse the proposition that there is any such blind obedience on a large scale in the country today. I have again and again appealed to reason, and let me assure him that, if happily the country has come to believe in the spinning-wheel as the giver of plenty, it has done so after laborious thinking, after great hesitation. I am not sure that even now educated India has assimilated the truth underlying the charkha. He must not mistake the surface dirt for the substance underneath. Let him go deeper and see for himself whether the charkha has been accepted from blind faith or from reasoned necessity.

I do indeed ask the Poet and the Sage to spin the wheel as a sacrament. When there is war, the poet lays down the lyre, the lawyer his law reports, the schoolboy his books. The poet will sing the true note after the war is over, the lawyer will have occasion to go to his law books when people have time to fight among themselves. When a house is on fire, all the inmates go out and each one takes up a bucket to quench the fire. When all about me are dying for want of food, the only occupation permissible to me is to feed the hungry. It is my conviction that India is a house on fire, because its manhood is being daily scorched; it is dying of hunger, because it has no work to buy food with.

Khulna is starving, not because the people cannot work but because they have no work. The Ceded Districts are passing successively through a fourth famine. Orissa is a land suffering from chronic famines. Our cities are not India. India lives in her seven and a half lakhs of villages and the cities live upon the villages. They do not bring their wealth from other countries. The city people are brokers and commission agents for the big houses of Europe, America and Japan. The cities have co-operated with the latter in the bleeding process that has gone on for the past two hundred years. It is my belief based on experience that India is daily growing poorer. The circulation about her feet and legs has almost stopped. And if we do not take care she will collapse altogether.

To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. God created man to work for his food and said that those who ate without work were thieves. Eighty per cent of India are compulsory thieves half the year. Is it any wonder if India has become one vast prison? Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning-wheel. The call of the spinning-wheel is noblest of all, because it is the call of love. And love is swaraj. The spinning-wheel will curb the mind when time spent on necessary physical labour can be said to do so. We must think of the millions who are today less than animals, who are almost in a dying state. The spinning-wheel is the reviving draught for millions of our dying countrymen and countrywomen. "Why should I, who have no need to work for food, spin?" may be the question asked. Because I am eating what does not belong to me. I am living on the spoliation of my countrymen. Trace the course of every pice that finds its way into your pocket and you will realize the truth of what I write.

Swaraj has no meaning for the millions if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. The attainment of this swaraj is possible within a short time, and it is so possible only by the revival of the spinning-wheel.

I do want growth, I do want self-determination, I do want all these for the soul. I doubt if the steel age is an advance upon the flint age. I am indifferent. It is the evolution of the soul to which the intellect and all our faculties have to be devoted. I have no difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man armoured after the modern style making some lasting and new discovery for mankind, but I have less difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man having nothing but a bit of flint and a nail for lighting his path or his match-lock ever singing new hymns of praise and delivering to an aching world a message of peace and goodwill upon earth. A plea for the spinning-wheel is a plea for recognizing the dignity of labour.

I claim that in losing the spinning-wheel we lost our left lung. We are, therefore, suffering from galloping consumption. The restoration of the wheel arrests the progress of the fell disease. There are certain things which all must do in all climes. The spinning-wheel is the thing which all must turn in the Indian clime for the transition stage at any rate and the vast majority must for all time.

It was our love of foreign cloth that ousted the wheel from its position of dignity. Therefore I consider it a sin to wear foreign cloth. I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another

are immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour. It is sinful to eat American wheat and let my neighbour, the grain dealer, starve for want of custom. Similarly it is sinful for me to wear the latest finery of Regent Street when I know that if I had but worn the things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weavers, that would have clothed me, and fed and clothed them. On the knowledge of my sin bursting upon me, I must consign the foreign garments to the flames and thus purify myself and thenceforth rest content with the rough khadi made by my neighbours. On knowing that my neighbours may not, having given up the occupation, take kindly to the spinning-wheel, I must take it up myself and thus make it popular.

I venture to suggest to the Poet that the clothes I ask him to burn must be and are his. If they had, to his knowledge, belonged to the poor or the ill-clad, he would long ago have restored to the poor what was theirs. In burning my foreign clothes I burn my shame. I must refuse to insult the naked by giving them clothes they do not need, instead of giving them work which they sorely need. I will not commit the sin of becoming their patron, but on learning that I had assisted in impoverishing them, I would give them a privileged position and give them neither crumbs nor cast off clothing, but the best of my food and clothes and associate myself with them in work.

Nor is the scheme of non-co-operation or swadeshi an exclusive doctrine. My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-tops that the message of non-co-operation, non-violence and swadeshi is a message to the world. It must fall flat if it does not bear fruit in the soil where it has been delivered. At the present moment India has nothing to share with the world, save her degradation,

pauperism, and plagues. Is it her ancient Shastras that we should send to the world? Well, they are printed in many editions, and an incredulous and idolatrous world refuses to look at them, because we, the heirs and custodians, do not live them. Before therefore I can think of sharing with the world, I must possess. Our non-co-operation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our non-co-operation is with the system the English have established, with the material civilization and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak. Our non-co-operation is a retirement within ourselves. Our non-co-operation is a refusal to co-operate with the English administrators on their own terms. We say to them: "Come and co-operate with us on our terms and it will be well for us, for you, and the world." We must refuse to be lifted off our feet. A drowning man cannot save others. In order to be fit to save others we must try to save ourselves. Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious and therefore humanitarian. India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity. The mice which helplessly find themselves between the cat's teeth acquire no merit from their enforced sacrifice. True to his poetical instinct, the Poet lives for the morrow and would have us do likewise. He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of the birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky. These birds had their day's food and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood had flown during the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching birds who, for want of strength, could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. It is an indescribably painful state which has to be experienced to be realized. I found it impossible to soothe

suffering patients with a song from Kabir. The hungry millions ask for one poem—invigorating food. They cannot be given it. They must earn it. And they can earn only by the sweat of their brow.

Young India, 13-10-1921

A PUZZLE AND ITS SOLUTION*

Lord Reading is puzzled and perplexed. Speaking in reply to the addresses from the British Indian Association and the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta, His Excellency said :

I confess that when I contemplate the activities of a section of the community, I find myself still, notwithstanding persistent study ever since I have been in India, puzzled and perplexed. I ask myself what purpose is served by flagrant breaches of the law for the purpose of challenging the Government and in order to compel arrest.

The answer was partly given by Pandit Motilal Nehru when he said on being arrested that he was being taken to the house of freedom. We seek arrest because the so-called freedom is slavery. We are challenging the might of this Government because we consider its activity to be wholly evil. We want to overthrow the Government. We want to compel its submission to the people's will. We desire to show that the Government exists to serve the people, not the people the Government. Free life under the Government has become intolerable, for the price exacted for the retention of freedom is unconscionably great. Whether we are one or many, we must refuse to purchase freedom at the cost of our self-

* This is one of the articles for which Gandhiji was tried and sentenced to six years imprisonment in March, 1922.

respect or our cherished convictions. I have known even little children become unbending when an attempt has been made to cross their declared purpose, be it ever so flimsy in the estimation of their parents.

Lord Reading must clearly understand that the non-co-operators are at war with the Government. They have declared rebellion against it inasmuch as it has committed a breach of faith with the Mussulmans, it has humiliated the Punjab and it insists upon imposing its will upon the people and refuses to repair the breach and repent of the wrong done in the Punjab.

There were two ways open to the people, the way of armed rebellion and the way of peaceful revolt. Non-co-operators have chosen, some out of weakness, some out of strength, the way of peace, i.e., voluntary suffering.

If the people are behind the sufferers, the Government must yield or be overthrown. If the people are not with them they have at least the satisfaction of not having sold their freedom. In an armed conflict, the more violent is generally the victor. The way of peace and suffering is the quickest method of cultivating public opinion, and, therefore, when victory is attained, it is for what the world regards as Truth. Bred in the atmosphere of law-courts, Lord Reading finds it difficult to appreciate the peaceful resistance to authority. His Excellency will learn by the time the conflict is over that there is a higher court than courts of justice, and that is the court of conscience. It supersedes all other courts.

Lord Reading is welcome to treat all the sufferers as lunatics, who do not know their own interest. He is entitled, therefore, to put them out of harm's way. It is an arrange-

ment that entirely suits the lunatics and it is an ideal arrangement that entirely suits the Government. He will have cause to complain if, having courted imprisonment, non-co-operators fret and fume or "whine for favours" as Lalaji puts it. The strength of a non-co-operator lies in his going to jail uncomplainingly. He loses his case if, having courted imprisonment, he begins to grumble, immediately his courtship is rewarded.

The threats used by His Excellency are unbecoming. This is a fight to the finish. It is a conflict between the reign of violence and of public opinion. Those who are fighting for the latter are determined to submit to any violence rather than surrender their opinion.

Young India, 15-12-1921

REJOINDER TO GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

February 7, 1922

I have very carefully read the Government's reply to my letter. I confess that I was totally unprepared for such an evasion of the realities of the case as the reply betrays. I will take the very first repudiation. The reply says :

They (the Government) emphatically repudiate the statement that they have embarked on a policy of lawless repression and also the suggestion that the present campaign of civil disobedience has been forced on the Non-co-operation party in order to secure the elementary rights of free association, free speech and free press.

Even a cursory glance at my letter would show that whilst civil disobedience was authorized by the All-India Congress Committee meeting held on the 4th November at Delhi, it had not commenced. I have made it clear in my letter that the contemplated mass civil disobedience was indefinitely postponed on account of the regrettable events of the 17th November in Bombay. That decision was duly published and it is within the knowledge of the Government as also the public that Herculean efforts were being made to combat the still lingering violent tendency amongst the people. It is also within the knowledge of the Government and the public that a special form of pledge was devised to be signed by volunteers with the deliberate purpose of keeping out all but men of proved character. The

primary object of these volunteer associations was to inculcate amongst the masses the lessons of non-violence and to keep the peace at all non-co-operation functions. Unfortunately the Government of India lost its head completely over the Bombay events and perhaps still more over the very complete hartal on the same date at Calcutta. I do not wish to deny that there might have been some intimidation practised in Calcutta, but it was not, I venture to submit, the fact of intimidation but the irritation caused by the completeness of the hartal that maddened the Government of India as also the Government of Bengal. Repression there was even before that time, but nothing was said or done in connection with it. But the repression that came in the wake of the notifications proclaiming the Criminal Law Amendment Act for the purpose of dealing with volunteer associations and the Seditious Meetings Act for the purpose of dealing with public meetings held by non-co-operators, came upon the non-co-operation community as a bomb-shell.

I repeat then that these notifications and the arrests of Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in Bengal, the arrest of Pandit Motilal Nehru and his co-workers in the U.P., and of Lala Lajpat Rai and his party in the Punjab, made it absolutely necessary to take up, not yet aggressive civil disobedience, but only defensive civil disobedience, otherwise described as passive resistance. Even Sir Hormusjee Wadia was obliged to declare that, if the Bombay Government followed the precedents set by the Government of Bengal, U.P. and the Punjab, he would be bound to resist such notifications, that is, to enrol himself as a volunteer or to attend public meetings in defiance of Government order to the contrary. It is thus clear that a case has been completely made out for civil disobedience, unless the Government revised its policy which has resulted

in the stopping of public meetings, public associations and the non-co-operation Press in many parts of India.

Now for the statement that the Government have embarked on a policy of lawless repression instead of an ample expression of regret and apology for the barbarous deeds that have been committed by officers in the name of law and order. I regret to find in the Government reply a categorical denial of any lawless repression. In this connection I urge the Public and Government carefully to consider the following facts whose substance is beyond challenge : (1) The official shooting at Entally in Calcutta and the callous treatment even of a corpse; (2) The admitted brutality of the civil guards; (3) The forcible dispersal of a meeting at Dacca and the dragging of innocent men by their legs although they had given no offence or cause whatsoever; (4) Similar treatment of volunteers in Aligarh; (5) The conclusive (in my opinion) findings of the Committee presided over by Dr. Gokul Chand Narang about the brutal and uncalled for assaults upon volunteers and the public in Lahore; (6) The wicked and inhuman treatment of volunteers and the public at Jullundur; (7) The shooting of a boy at Dehra Dun and the cruelly forcible dispersal of a public meeting of that place; (8) The looting admitted by the Bihar Government of villages by an officer and his company without any permission whatsoever from any one, but, as stated by non-co-operators, at the invitation of a planter, and the assaults upon volunteers and the burning of khaddar and papers belonging to the Congress at Sonapur; (9) The midnight searches and arrest in the Congress and Khilafat offices.

I have merely given a sample of the "many infallible" proofs of official lawlessness and barbarism. I have mentioned not even a tithe of what is happening all over the country. I

wish to state, without fear of successful contradiction, that the scale on which this lawlessness had gone on in so many provinces of India puts into shade the inhumanities that were practised in the Punjab, if we except the crawling order and the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh. It is my certain conviction that the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh was a clean transaction compared to the unclean transactions described above and the pity of it is that, because people are not shot or butchered, the tortures through which hundreds of inoffensive men have gone through do not produce a shock sufficient to turn everybody's face against this Government. But as if this warfare against innocence was not enough, the reins are being tightened in the Jails. We know nothing of what is happening today in Karachi Jail, to a solitary prisoner in the Sabarmati Jail and to a batch in the Banaras Jail, all of whom are as innocent as I claim to be myself. Their crime consists in their constituting themselves the trustees of national honour and dignity. I am hoping that these proud and defiant spirits will not be bent into submission to insolence masquerading in the official garb. I deny the right of the authorities to insist on high-souled men appearing before them almost naked or pay any obsequious respect to them by way of *salaaming* with open palms brought together, or reciting to the intonation of *Sarkar-ki-jai*. No godfearing man will do the latter even if he has to be kept standing in his stock for days and nights, as a Bengal school-master is reported to have been.

For the sake of the dignity of human nature I trust that Lord Reading and his draftsmen do not know the facts that I have adduced or, being carried away by their belief in the infallibility of their employees, refuse to believe in the statements which the public regards as God's truth. If there is the slightest exaggeration in the statements

that I have made, I shall as publicly withdraw them and apologize for them as I am making them now, but, as it is, I undertake to prove the substance of every one of these charges if not the very letter, and much more of them before any impartial tribunal of men or women unconnected with the Government. I invite Pandit Malaviyaji and those who are performing the thankless task of securing a round table conference to form an impartial commission to investigate these charges by which I stand or fall.

It is the physical and brutal ill-treatment of humanity which has made many of my co-workers and myself impatient of life itself, and in the face of these things I don't wish to take public time by dealing in detail with what I mean by abuse of the common law of the country, but I cannot help correcting the mis-impression which is likely to be created in connection with the Bombay disorders. Disgraceful and deplorable as they were, let it be remembered that of the 53 persons who lost their lives, over 45 were non-co-operators or their sympathizers, the hooligans; and of the 400 wounded, to be absolutely on the safe side, over 350 were also derived from the same class. I do not complain. The non-co-operators and the friendly hooligans got what they deserved. They began the violence and they reaped the reward. Let it also not be forgotten that, with all deference to the Bombay Government, it was non-co-operators, ably assisted by Independents and Co-operators, who brought peace out of that chaos of the two days following the fateful 17th.

I must totally deny the imputation that "the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was confined to associations, the majority of the members of which had habitually indulged in violence and intimidation." The prisons of India today hold some of the most inoffensive men and hardly

any who have either resorted to violence or intimidation and who are convicted under that law. Abundant proof can be produced in support of this statement, as also of the statement of the fact that almost wherever meetings have been broken up, there was actually no risk of violence.

The Government of India deny that the Viceroy had laid down, upon the apology of the Ali Brothers, the civilized policy of non-interference with the non-violent activities of non-co-operators. I am extremely sorry for this repudiation. The very part of the *communique* reproduced in the reply is in my opinion sufficient proof that the Government did not intend to interfere with such activities. The Government did not wish it to be inferred that "speeches promoting disaffection of a less violent character were not an offence against the law". I have never stated that breach of any law was not to be an offence against it, but I have stated, as I repeat now, that it was not the intention of the Government then to prosecute for non-violent activities although they might amount to a technical breach of the law.

As to the conditions of the Conference, the Government reply evidently omits to mention the two words "and otherwise" after the words "Calcutta speech" in my letter. I repeat that the terms "I would gather from the Calcutta speech and otherwise" were nearly the same that were mentioned in the resolutions of the Malaviya Conference. What are called the unlawful activities of the N.C.O. Party, being a reply to the notifications of the Government, would have ceased automatically with the withdrawal of those notifications, because the formation of Volunteer Corps and public meetings would not be unlawful activities after the withdrawal of the offending notification. Even while the negotiations were going on in Calcutta, the discharge of *fatwa* prisoners

was asked for, and I can only repeat what I have said elsewhere that, if it is disloyal to say that military service under the existing system of Government is a sin against God and humanity, I fear that such disloyalty must continue.

The Government *communique* does me a cruel wrong by imputing to me a desire that the proposed round table conference should be called "merely to register" my "decrees". I did state, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, the Congress demands, as I felt I was in duty bound, in as clear terms as possible. No Congressman could approach any conference without making his position clear. I expected the ordinary courtesy of not considering me or any Congressman to be impervious to reason or argument. It is open to anybody to convince me that the demands of the Congress regarding the Khilafat, the Punjab and swaraj are wrong or unreasonable and I would certainly retrace my steps and, so far as I am concerned, rectify the wrong. The Government of India know that such has been always my attitude.

The *communique*, strangely enough, says that the demands set forth in my Manifesto are even larger than those of the Working Committee. I claim that they fall far below the demands of the Working Committee, for what I now ask against the total suspension of civil disobedience of an aggressive character is merely the stoppage of ruthless repression, the release of prisoners convicted under it and a clear declaration of policy. The demands of the Working Committee included a round table conference. In my Manifesto I have not asked for a round table conference at all. It is true that this waiving of a round table conference does not proceed from any expediency, but it is a confession of present weakness. I freely recognize that unless India be-

comes saturated with the spirit of non-violence and generates disciplined strength that can only come from non-violence, she cannot enforce her demands and it is for that reason that I now consider that the first thing for the people to do is to secure a reversal of this mad repression and then to concentrate upon more complete organization and more construction. And here again the *communique* does me an injustice by merely stating that civil disobedience of an aggressive character will be postponed until the opportunity is given to the imprisoned leaders of reviewing the whole situation after their discharge and by conveniently omitting to mention the following conclusion of my letter: "If the Government make the requested declaration, I shall regard it as an honest desire on its part to give effect to public opinion and shall therefore have no hesitation in advising the country to be engaged in further moulding public opinion without violent restraint from either side and trust to its working to secure the fulfilment of its unalterable demands. Aggressive civil disobedience in that case will be taken up only when the Government departs from its policy of strictest neutrality or refuse to yield to the clearly expressed opinion of the vast majority of the people of India."

I venture to claim extreme reasonableness and moderation for the above presentation of the case. The alternative before the people, therefore, is not, as the *communique* concludes, "between lawlessness with all its disastrous consequences on the one hand and on the other the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of all civilized Governments". "Mass civil disobedience," it adds, "is fraught with such danger to the State that it must be met with sternness and severity." The choice before the people is mass civil disobedience with all its undoubted dangers and lawless repression of the lawful activities of the people. I

hold that it is impossible for any body of self-respecting men for fear of unknown dangers to sit still and do nothing effective when looting of property and assaulting of innocent men are going on all over the country in the name of law and order.

Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi

THE CRIME OF CHAURI CHAURA

God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.

He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam, and Kheda erred; Amritsar and Kasur erred. I retraced my steps, called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man, and stopped not merely mass civil disobedience but even my own which, I knew, was intended to be civil and non-violent.

The next time it was through the events of Bombay that God gave a terrific warning. He made me eye-witness of the deeds of the Bombay mob on the 17th November. The mob acted in the interest of non-co-operation. I announced my intention to stop the mass civil disobedience which was to be immediately started in Bardoli. The humiliation was greater than in 1919. But it did me good. I am sure that the nation gained by the stopping. India stood for truth and non-violence by the suspension.

But the bitterest humiliation was still to come. Madras did give the warning, but I heeded it not. But God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. I understand that the constables

who were so brutally hacked to death had given much provocation. They had even gone back upon the word just given by the Inspector that they would not be molested, but when the procession had passed, the stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. The former cried out for help. The mob returned. The constables opened fire. The little ammunition they had was exhausted and they retired to the *Thana* for safety. The mob, my informant tells me, therefore set fire to the *Thanna*. The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life and as they did so, they were hacked to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames.

It is claimed that no non-co-operation volunteer had a hand in the brutality and that the mob had not only the immediate provocation but they had also general knowledge of the high-handed tyranny of the police in that district. No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenceless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob. And when an Indian claims to be non-violent and hopes to mount the throne of liberty through non-violent means, mob-violence even in answer to grave provocation is a bad augury. Suppose the "non-violent" disobedience of Bardoli was permitted by God to succeed, the Government had abdicated in favour of the victors of Bardoli, who would control the unruly element that must be expected to perpetrate inhumanity upon due provocation ? Non-violent attainment of self-government presupposes a non-violent control over the violent elements in the country. Non-violent non-co-operators can only succeed when they have succeeded in attaining control over the hooligans of India, in other words, when the latter also have learnt patriotically, or religiously to refrain from their violent activities, at least whilst the campaign of non-co-operation is

going on. The tragedy at Chauri Chaura, therefore, roused me thoroughly.

“But what about your manifesto to the Viceroy and your rejoinder to his reply ?” spoke the voice of Satan. It was the bitterest cup of humiliation to drink. “Surely it is cowardly to withdraw the next day after pompous threat to the Government and promises to the people of Bardoli.” Thus Satan’s invitation was to deny Truth and therefore Religion, to deny God Himself. I put my doubts and troubles before the Working Committee and other associates whom I found near me. They did not at all agree with me at first. Some of them probably do not even now agree with me. But never has a man been blessed, perhaps, with colleagues and associates so considerate and forgiving as I have. They understood my difficulty and patiently followed my argument. The drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound, and I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error.

The only virtue I want to claim is Truth and Non-violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow-beings wears and am therefore as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections.

For, confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before, I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path.

It has been urged that Chauri Chaura cannot affect Bardoli. There is danger, it is argued, only if Bardoli is weak enough to be swayed by Chauri Chaura and is betrayed into violence. I have no doubt whatsoever on that account. The people of Bardoli are in my opinion the most peaceful in India. But Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is perfect co-operation from the other parts. Bardoli's disobedience will be civil only when the other parts of India remain non-violent. Just as the addition of a grain of arsenic to a pot of milk renders it unfit as food, so will the civility of Bardoli prove unacceptable by the addition of the deadly poison from Chauri Chaura. The latter represents India as much as Bardoli.

Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom, I have never imagined that there has been no violence, mental or physical, in the places where repression is going on. Only I have believed, I still believe and the pages of *Young India* amply prove, that the repression is out of all proportion to the insignificant popular violence in the areas of repression. The determined holding of meetings in prohibited areas I do not call violence. The violence I am referring to is the throwing of brick-bats or intimidation and coercion practised in stray cases. As a matter of fact in civil disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering. Its effect is marvellous though unperceived and gentle. But I regarded certain amount of excitement as inevitable, certain amount of unintended violence even pardonable, i.e., I did not consider civil disobedience impossible in somewhat imperfect conditions. Under perfect conditions disobedience when civil is hardly felt. But the present movement is admittedly a dangerous experiment.

The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index finger.

It shows the way India may easily go if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere of peace, rearrange our programme and not think of starting mass civil disobedience, until we are sure of peace being retained in spite of mass civil disobedience being started and in spite of Government provocation. We must be sure of unauthorized portions not starting mass civil disobedience.

As it is, the Congress organization is still imperfect and its instructions are still perfunctorily carried out. We have not established Congress Committees in every one of the villages. Where we have, they are not perfectly amenable to our instructions. We have not probably more than one crore of members on the roll. We are in the middle of February, yet not many have paid the annual four-anna subscription for the current year. Volunteers are indifferently enrolled. They do not conform to all the conditions of their pledge. They do not even wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. All the Hindu volunteers have not yet purged themselves of the sin of untouchability. All are not free from the taint of violence. Not by their imprisonment are we going to win swaraj or serve the holy cause of the Khilafat or attain the ability to stop payment to faithless servants. Some of us err in spite of ourselves. But some others among us sin wilfully. They join Volunteer Corps well knowing that they are not and do not intend to remain non-violent. We are thus untruthful even as we hold the Government to be untruthful. We dare not enter the Kingdom of Liberty with mere lip homage to Truth and Non-violence.

Suspension of mass civil disobedience, and subsidence of excitement, are necessary for further progress, indeed,

indispensable to prevent further retrogression. I hope, therefore, that by suspension every Congressman or woman will not only not feel disappointed but he or she will feel relieved of the burden of unreality and of national sin.

Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. It is a million times better to appear untrue before the world than to be untrue to ourselves.

And so, for me the suspension of mass civil disobedience and other minor activities that were calculated to keep up excitement is not enough penance for my having been the instrument, howsoever involuntary, of the brutal violence by the people at Chauri Chaura.

I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have much deeper truth and humility about them than they evidence. And for me there is nothing so helpful and cleansing as a fast accompanied by the necessary mental co-operation.

I know that the mental attitude is everything. Just as a prayer may be merely a mechanical intonation as of a bird, so may a fast be a mere mechanical torture of the flesh. Such mechanical contrivances are valueless for the purpose intended. Again just as a mechanical chant may result in the modulation of voice, a mechanical fast may result in purifying the body. Neither will touch the soul within.

But a fast undertaken for fuller self-expression, for attainment of the spirit's supremacy over the flesh, is a most

powerful factor in one's evolution. After deep consideration, therefore, I am imposing on myself a five days' continuous fast permitting myself water. It commenced on Sunday* evening, it ends on Friday evening. This is the least I must do.

I have taken into consideration the All-India Congress Committee meeting in front of me. I have in mind the anxious pain even the five days' fast will cause many friends; but I can no longer postpone the penance nor lessen it.

I urge co-workers not to copy my example. The motive in their case will be lacking. They are not the originators of civil disobedience. I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skill-less to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. Whilst the personal penance is not only necessary but obligatory on me, the exemplary self-restraint prescribed by the Working Committee is surely sufficient penance for everyone else. It is no small penance and if sincerely carried out, it can become infinitely more real and better than fasting. What can be richer and more fruitful than a greater fulfilment of the vow of non-violence in thought, word and deed or the spread of that spirit? It will be more than food for me during the week to observe that comrades are all silently and without idle discussion engaged in fulfilling the constructive programme sketched by the Working Committee, in enlisting Congress members after making sure that they understand the Congress creed of truth and non-violence for the attainment of swaraj, in daily and religiously spinning for a fixed time, in introducing the wheel of prosperity and freedom in every home, in visiting "untouchable" homes and finding out their wants, in inducing national schools to receive

*February 12, 1922

“untouchable” children, in organizing social service specially designed to find a common platform for every variety of man and woman, and in visiting the homes which the drink curse is desolating, in establishing real *panchayats* and in organizing national schools on a proper footing. The workers will be better engaged in these activities than in fasting. I hope, therefore, that no one will join me in fasting, either through false sympathy or an ignorant conception of the spiritual value of fasting.

All fasting and all penance must as far as possible be secret. But my fasting is both a penance and a punishment, and a punishment has to be public. It is penance for me and punishment for those whom I try to serve, for whom I love to live and would equally love to die. They have unintentionally sinned against the laws of the Congress though they were sympathizers if not actually connected with it. Probably they hacked the constables—their countrymen and fellow-beings—with my name on their lips. The only way love punishes is by suffering. I cannot even wish them to be arrested. But I would let them know that I would suffer for their breach of the Congress creed. I would advise those who feel guilty and repentant to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment and make a clean confession. I hope that the workers in the Gorakhpur district will leave no stone unturned to find out the evil-doers and urge them to deliver themselves into custody. But whether the murderers accept my advice or not, I would like them to know that they have seriously interfered with swaraj operations, that in being the cause of the postponement of the movemet in Bardoli, they have injured the very cause they probably intended to serve. I would like them to know, too, that this movement is not a cloak or a preparation for violence. I would, at any rate, suffer every humiliation,

every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent or a precursor of violence. I make my penance public also because I am now denying myself the opportunity of sharing their lot with the prisoners. The immediate issue has again shifted, we can no longer press for the withdrawal of notifications or discharge of prisoners. They and we must suffer for the crime of Chauri Chaura. The incident proves, whether we wish it or no, the unity of life. All, including even the administrators, must suffer. Chauri Chaura must stiffen the Government, must still further corrupt the police, and the reprisals that will follow must further demoralize the people. The suspension and the penance will take us back to the position we occupied before the tragedy. By strict discipline and purification we regain the moral confidence required for demanding the withdrawal of notifications and the discharge of prisoners.

If we learn the full lesson of the tragedy, we can turn the curse into a blessing. By becoming truthful and non-violent, both in spirit and deed, and by making the swadeshi, i.e., the khaddar programme complete, we can establish full swaraj and redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs without a single person having to offer civil disobedience.

DIVINE WARNING

A man is pardoned if he errs once ; if he errs a second time, even then a liberal-minded person will pardon him. But what if he errs thrice ? What else will he merit except dismissal ?

We describe anyone who gets cheated once as simple, and anyone who gets cheated twice as credulous. If, now, a person allows himself to be cheated thrice, what but a fool should we call him ?

Bardoli's civil disobedience has vanished like a dream. God meant to stop it at the very moment when it was to start. There is nothing to wonder at in this. If for one like Rama the hour of coronation turned out to be the hour for going to the forest, why speak of Bardoli ? It is only when we have had the experience again and again of things which had once appeared real to us having faded away into dreams that we shall learn the true meaning of swaraj. At present, only one meaning of swaraj seems true to me. Swaraj is nothing but the sincere effort to win it. The thing itself will seem to move further away from us the more we run after it.

This is true of every ideal. As a person becomes ever more truthful, truth runs farther away from him because he knows that what he mistakenly thought to be truth was not really the truth.

Hence, one who follows truth—one who acts rightly—is

ever humble ; he sees his shortcomings more clearly day by day. *Brahmacharya* is ever running away from a person who tries to observe it, for he discovers that, deep down, desire is still strong in him. He is never satisfied with being able to observe physical continence. *Moksha* also recedes farther away from an aspirant. This fact inspired the profound expression "neti". A number of great *rishis* in ancient times set out to seek *moksha* to realize the *atman*. In its pursuit, they descended into many valleys and climbed many hills, jumped over thorny hedges and discovered, at the end of the journey : "It cannot be this". Who knows how many of them caught a faint glimpse of *moksha*? And yet they were so discerning, so intelligent, that, as we know, they were not deceived.

I, therefore, see ever more clearly that for us swaraj lies in our struggle to win it.

In 1919, Ahmedabad and Viramgam, Amritsar and Kasur showed my error and satyagraha was suspended. Last November, I witnessed in Bombay man's barbarism and again suspended mass civil disobedience. Even then I did not learn the lesson completely. Now it is Chauri Chaura which has punished me. Who knows how many more such blows are in store for me ! If now people reject my leadership and regard me a fool, they will not be to blame.

If I do not know human nature, why do I meddle with such affairs ?

I just cannot hold myself back. I also cannot but admit my error when I see it. I would welcome being dismissed, I would be very happy indeed to be counted a fool, but I will certainly not defile my soul by retaining the filth of error in

my body.

“If the king gets angry, the city will shelter me ; if God is displeased, where shall I turn ?” I do not know if Mira actually composed any song with this line, but she certainly lived her life in that spirit. We may bear the world’s reproaches, but we shall not be guilty in the eyes of God. We should heed His warning.

Had we proceeded with the proposed civil disobedience in Bardoli despite the divine warning from Gorakhpur, we would have certainly regretted the step. The people would have suffered much and our regard for truth and non-violence would have been discredited. We are known as cowards and then we would have been regarded as liars as well. If other parts of India remain peaceful, then only should Bardoli start disobedience—that was what I said, that was the condition. If Bardoli had started civil disobedience despite the violation of that condition, then it too would have sinned.

If anyone argues that such peace will never be preserved in the country, we may not contradict him. This is however, an argument for giving up the path of satyagraha and civility. Let the country do anything it likes after renouncing the path of civility ; our duty is only to see that it does not follow untruth while talking of truth and does not commit violence while talking of non-violence. Bardoli has observed those conditions well enough, and so have I. By acting thus, both have served the people and I personally have proved my fitness as a servant. By admitting errors, the people will rise higher, not fall lower.

Truly, it is God Who has saved our fair name. I should have taken a warning from the Madras incidents. I should also have done so from the letters I received from our opponents and

from non-co-operators. I did not take the warning ; but, then, if a person who enjoys God's kindness does not get warned by a sign, God warns him by beat of drum and, if he does not understand the warning even then, He warns him by thunder and lightning and by a downpour of rain. By doing a duty which requires no great effort, we have escaped big dangers.

If we have had to bend, to retreat, it is in order that we may advance. A person who strays from the path must first return to the point where he left it. After he has returned to it, his progress will be resumed. That is to say, we, who were slipping down when the Working Committee passed its resolution, began to rise again after that.

But this did not satisfy me. I, therefore, felt it necessary to undertake further atonement. My agony had begun the moment telegrams about Gorakhpur were received. But it was necessary that I go through bodily suffering as well. Considering the magnitude of my error, I should not have contended myself merely with a five days' fast. I wished to fast for 14 days. But I let it be five days. If this atonement is insufficient, I shall have to pay the balance sooner or later, along with compound interest. Anyone who repays his full debt in time saves himself from having to pay a greater amount later.

Atonement should not be advertised. But I have publicized mine, and there is a reason. My fast is atonement for me but, for the people of Chauri Chaura, it is a punishment. The punishment inflicted by love is always of this nature. When a lover is hurt, he does not punish the loved one, but suffers himself ; he bears the pangs of hunger and hits his own head. He is unconcerned whether or not his loved ones understand his sufferings.

But I have also made my fast public by way of warning to others as well, I have no alternative left to me. If a non-co-operator deceived me—and I regard almost the whole of the country as a non-co-operator—he may have my body. I fondly believe that the country wants me to live. If that is so, by undertaking bodily suffering I suggest to the country that it should not deceive me. If it likes, it may well disown me after rejecting the condition of non-violence. But, so long as it accepts my services, it will have to accept non-violence and truth.

This time I have been content with a fast of five days. If, however, the people refuse to take the warning, five days may become fifteen and fifteen become fifty and I may even lose my life.

I am writing this article on the third day of my fast*. I am perfectly clear in my mind that the Hindus, the Muslims, the Parsis, the Christians and the rest will get swaraj only by following the path of non-violence and it is by following the same path that they will serve the cause of the Khilafat and get justice in regard to the Punjab. It was accepted at the Congress session and in the Khilafat conferences. If, despite this, we give it up, we shall be fighting not for our dharma, not for God, but for *adharma* and for Satan.

We should not follow the bad example of others, not even that of Gazi Mustafa Kamal Pasha. "If a short man runs with a tall one he may not die, but he will certainly fall ill" is a true saying. Even a wise man acts in accordance with his nature, and so does the rest of the world. What, then, can one gain by coercion? I speak the truth when I say that India will never come to rule an empire through physical strength. It

* Which commenced on February, 12

is doing violence to her nature to expect her to win anything through such strength. By her very nature, India is a lover of peace. That is why, whether she knows it or not, she has gone crazy over non-violent non-co-operation based on truth. No one came forward to follow the bad example of the mad men of Ahmedabad and Viramgam. No one, likewise, will imitate the example of the mad folk of Chauri Chaura. Such madness is not in India's nature, it is only a disease. On the other hand, Mustafa Kamal Pasha succeeded with his sword because there is strength in every nerve of a Turk. The Turks have been fighters for centuries. The people of India have followed the path of peace for thousands of years. We shall not discuss at the moment which people did the better thing. Both violence and non-violence have a place in the world. The *atman* and the body, both succeed. Whether eventually the *atman* wins or the body, this is not the occasion to consider. If we wish to discuss it, we may do so after we have won swaraj. Let us, at present, employ the easiest means to gain it. India's nature cannot be changed in a moment. I am convinced that those who wish to free the country with the help of the sword will need ages to succeed in their effort.

If even the Muslims of India try to follow in the footsteps of Mustafa Kamal Pasha, they will taint the fair name of Islam. Islam attaches the utmost importance to peace. Patience is far better than anger, than the use of physical force. The people of India have followed peace and truth for a long time. Let them win swaraj this very day by adopting them again ; if they discard these, they had better remain slaves. One cannot in the same moment proceed towards both east and west. The path followed by the West is one of violence and atheism ; it looks like it for the present at any rate. The path followed by the East, it has long been proved, is one of peace, dharma and of faith in God. The centre of

the West at the present day is England. That of the East has been India since time immemorial. The world thinks that England rules an empire and India is her chief maid-servant. Our present effort is to win deliverance from this slavery. If this land of Bharat wishes to end her slavery, she can do so only with the help of her old weapons of non-violence and truth.

There is at the present time not a single country on the face of the earth which is weaker than India in point of physical strength. Even tiny Afghanistan can growl at her.

With whose help does India hope to fight with England ? Japan's ? If it fights with the help of Kabul, or of some other country, it will have to accept the slavery of that country. Hence, if the country wishes to be free in this generation, it can count on no help other than God's. And God protects only those who follow truth and non-violence. Thus, the divine warning from Gorakhpur wants us to understand this if we wish to see our dreams come true : We must cultivate the spirit of non-violence.

Navajivan, 19-2-1922

SHAKING THE MANES*

How can there be any compromise whilst the British Lion continues to shake his gory claws in our faces? Lord Birkenhead reminds us that Britain has lost none of her hard fibre. Mr. Montagu tells us in the plainest language that the British are the most determined nation in the world, who will brook no interference with their purpose. Let me quote the exact words telegraphed by Reuter :

If the existence of our Empire were challenged, the discharge of responsibilities of the British Government to India prevented and demands were made in the very mistaken belief that we contemplated retreat from India—then India would not challenge with success the most determined people in the world, who would once again answer the challenge with all the vigour and determination at its command.

Both Lord Birkenhead and Mr. Montagu little know that India is prepared for all “the hard fibre” that can be transported across the seas and that her challenge was issued in the September of 1920 at Calcutta that India would be satisfied with nothing less than swaraj and full redress of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs. This does involve the existence of the “Empire”, and if the present custodians of the British Empire are not satisfied with its quiet transformation

*This is one of the articles for which Gandhiji was tried and sentenced in March 1922.

into a true Commonwealth of free nations, each with equal rights and each having the power to secede at will from an honourable and friendly partnership, all the determination and vigour of "the most determined people in the world" and the "hard fibre" will have to be spent in India in a vain effort to crush the spirit that has risen and that will neither bend nor break. It is true that we have no "hard fibre". The rice-eating, puny millions of India seem to have resolved upon achieving their own destiny without any further tutelage and without arms. In the Lokamanya's language it is their "birthright", and they will have it in spite of the "hard fibre" and in spite of the vigour and determination with which it may be administered. India cannot and will not answer this insolence with insolence, but if she remains true to her pledge, her prayer to God to be delivered from such a scourge will certainly not go in vain. No empire intoxicated with the red wine of power and plunder of weaker races has yet lived long in this world, and this "British Empire", which is based upon organized exploitation of physically weaker races of the earth and upon a continuous exhibition of brute force, cannot live if there is a just God ruling the universe. Little do these so-called representatives of the British nation realize that India has already given many of her best men to be dealt with by the British "hard fibre". Had Chauri Chaura not interrupted the even course of the national sacrifice, there would have been still greater and more delectable offerings placed before the Lion, but God had willed it otherwise. There is nothing, however, to prevent all those representatives in Downing Street and Whitehall from doing their worst. I am aware that I have written strongly about the insolent threat that has come from across the seas, but it is high time that the British people were made to realize that the fight that was commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many months or many years and whether the represen-

tatives of Britain re-enact all the indescribable orgies of the Mutiny days with redoubled force or whether they do not. I shall only hope and pray that God will give India sufficient humility and sufficient strength to remain non-violent to the end. Submission to the insolent challenges that are cabled out on due occasions is now an utter impossibility.

Young India 23-2-1922

STATEMENT IN THE COURT*

March 18, 1922

I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England, to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up, that I should explain why, from a staunch loyalist and co-operator, I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the Court, too, I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and an Indian I had no rights. More correctly, I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian.

But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsi-

* Gandhiji was charged with exciting disaffection and spreading contempt and hatred towards His Majesty's Government. The charge was based on three articles he had written: "Tampering with Loyalty", "The Puzzle and its Solution" and "Shaking the Manes" published in the *Young India* of September 29, December 15, of 1921 and February 23 of 1922. Gandhiji pleaded guilty and submitted this written statement. He was sentenced to six years' imprisonment by Justice R. S. Broomfield on March 18, 1922. But he was later released on February 5, 1924 on grounds of health.

cally and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticizing it freely where I felt it was faulty, but never wishing its destruction. Consequently, when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906, at the time of the Zulu revolt, I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the rebellion. On both these occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in despatches. For my work in South Africa I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal. When the War broke out in 1914 between England and Germany, I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly, in India, when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1918 by Lord Chelmsford for recruits, I struggled at the cost of my health to raise a corps in Kheda and the response was being made when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all these efforts at service, I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such service to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen.

The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act, a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered, too, that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Mussulmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. But in

spite of the forebodings and the grave warnings of friends, at the Amritsar Congress in 1919, I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Mussulmans, that the Punjab wound would be healed and that the reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was white-washed and most culprits went not only unpunished, but remained in service and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue. Not only did the reforms not mark a change of heart, but they were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude.

I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. A disarmed India has no power of resistance against any aggressor if she wanted to engage in an armed conflict with him. So much is this the case that some of our best men consider that India must take generations before she can achieve the Dominion status. She has become so poor that she has little power of resisting famines. Before the British advent, India spun and wove in her millions of cottages just the supplement she needed for adding to her meagre agricultural resources. This cottage industry, so vital for India's existence, has been ruined by incredibly heartless and inhuman processes as described by English witnesses. Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from

the masses. Little do they realize that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for the exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiassed examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases has led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads one to the conclusion that in nine out of every ten cases the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in the love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the Courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do with such cases. In my opinion, the administration of the law is thus prostituted consciously or unconsciously for the benefit of the exploiter.

The greatest misfortune is that Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many English and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world and that India is making steady though slow progress. They do not know that a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organized display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people and produced in them the habit of simulation. This awful habit has added to the ignorance and the self-deception

of the administrators. Section 124A, under which I am happily charged, is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or system, one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection, so long as he does not contemplate, promote or incite to violence. But the section under which Mr. Banker and I are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it, and I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege, therefore, to be charged under it. I have endeavoured to give in their briefest outline the reasons for my disaffection. I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

In fact, I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But, in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil and that, as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil

requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-cooperation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the Judge, is either to resign your post and thus dissociate yourself from evil, if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent; or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country and that my activity is, therefore, injurious to the public weal.

Young India, 23-3-1922

SATYAGRAHA v. PASSIVE RESISTANCE

I have no idea when the phrase "passive resistance", was first used in English and by whom. But among the English people, whenever a small minority did not approve of some obnoxious piece of legislation, instead of rising in rebellion they took the passive or milder step of not submitting to the law and inviting the penalties of such non-submission upon their heads. When the British Parliament passed the Education Act some years ago, the Non-conformists offered passive resistance under the leadership of Dr. Clifford. The great movement of the English women for the vote was also known as passive resistance. It was in view of these two cases that Mr. Hosken described passive resistance as a weapon of the weak or the voteless. Dr. Clifford and his friends had the vote, but as they were in a minority in the Parliament, they could not prevent the passage of the Education Act. That is to say, they were weak in numbers. Not that they were averse to the use of arms for the attainment of their aims, but they had no hope of succeeding by force of arms. And in a well-regulated state, recourse to arms every now and then in order to secure popular rights would defeat its own purpose. Again some of the Non-conformists would generally object to taking up arms even if it was a practical proposition. The suffragists had no franchise rights. They were weak in numbers as well as in physical force. Thus their case lent colour to Mr. Hosken's observations. The suffragist movement did not eschew the use of physical force. Some suffragists fired buildings and even assaulted men. I do not think they ever intended to kill anyone. But they did intend to thrash people

when an opportunity occurred, and even thus to make things hot for them.

But brute force had absolutely no place in the Indian movement in any circumstance, and the reader will see, as we proceed, that no matter how badly they suffered, the satyagrahis never used physical force, and that too although there were occasions when they were in a position to use it effectively. Again, although the Indians had no franchise and were weak, these considerations had nothing to do with the organization of satyagraha. This is not to say that the Indians would have taken to satyagraha even if they had possessed arms or the franchise. Probably there would not have been any scope for satyagraha if they had the franchise. If they had arms, the opposite party would have thought twice before antagonizing them. One can therefore understand, that people who possess arms would have fewer occasions for offering satyagraha. My point is that I can definitely assert that in planning the Indian movement there never was the slightest thought given to the possibility or otherwise of offering armed resistance. Satyagraha is soul-force pure and simple, and whenever and to whatever extent there is room for the use of arms or physical force or brute force, there and to that extent is there so much less possibility for soul-force. These are purely antagonistic forces in my view, and I had full realization of this antagonism even at the time of the advent of satyagraha.

We will not stop here to consider whether these views are right or wrong. We are only concerned to note the distinction between passive resistance and satyagraha, and we have seen that there is a great and fundamental difference between the two. If without understanding this, those who call themselves either passive resisters or satyagrahis believe both to be

one and the same thing, there would be injustice to both, leading to untoward consequences. The result of our using the phrase "passive resistance" in South Africa was, not that people admired us by ascribing to us the bravery and the self-sacrifice of the suffragists but we were mistaken to be a danger to person and property which the suffragists were, and even a generous friend like Mr. Hosken imagined us to be weak. The power of suggestion is such that a man at last becomes what he believes himself to be. If we continue to believe that we are weak and helpless and therefore offer passive resistance, our resistance would never make us strong, and at the earliest opportunity we would give up passive resistance as a weapon of the weak. On the other hand if we are satyagrahis and offer satyagraha believing ourselves to be strong, two clear consequences result from it. Fostering the idea of strength, we grow stronger and stronger every day. With the increase in our strength, our satyagraha too becomes more effective and we would never be casting about for an opportunity to give it up. Again, while there is no scope for love in passive resistance, on the other hand not only has hatred no place in satyagraha but it is a positive breach of its ruling principle. While in passive resistance there is a scope for the use of arms when a suitable occasion arrives, in satyagraha physical force is forbidden even in the most favourable circumstances. Passive resistance is often looked upon as a preparation for the use of force while satyagraha can never be utilized as such. Passive resistance may be offered side by side with the use of arms. Satyagraha and brute force, being each a negation of the other, can never go together. Satyagraha may be offered to one's nearest and dearest; passive resistance can never be offered to them unless of course they have ceased to be dear and become an object of hatred to us. In passive resistance there is always present an idea of harassing the other party and there is a simultaneous

readiness to undergo any hardships entailed upon us by such activity; while in satyagraha there is not the remotest idea of injuring the opponent. Satyagraha postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person.

These are the distinctions between the two forces. But I do not wish to suggest that the merits, or if you like, the defects of passive resistance thus enumerated are to be seen in every movement which passes by that name. But it can be shown that these defects have been noticed in many cases of passive resistance. Jesus Christ indeed has been acclaimed as the prince of passive resisters but I submit in that case passive resistance must mean satyagraha and satyagraha alone. There are not many cases in history of passive resistance in that sense. One of these is that of the Doukhobors of Russia cited by Tolstoy. The phrase passive resistance was not employed to denote the patient suffering of oppression by thousands of devout Christians in the early days of Christianity. I would therefore class them as satyagrahis. And if their conduct be described as passive resistance, passive resistance becomes synonymous with satyagraha. It has been my object to show that satyagraha is essentially different from what people generally mean in English by the phrase "passive resistance".

Satyagraha in South Africa; also Navajivan, 25-5-1924

ALL ABOUT THE FAST

September 22, 1924

I wish to assure the reader that the fast* has not been undertaken without deliberation. As a matter of fact my life has been a stake ever since the birth of non-co-operation. I did not blindly embark upon it. I had ample warning of the dangers attendant upon it. No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies ? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot therefore detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous). Whether therefore I will or no, I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.

I knew that non-co-operation was a dangerous experiment. Non-co-operation in itself is unnatural, vicious and

* On September 17, 1924 Gandhiji had commenced 21 days fast as "penance and prayer" for Hindu-Muslim unity.

sinful. But non-violent, non-co-operation, I am convinced, is a sacred duty at times. I have proved it in many cases. But there was every possibility of mistake in its application to large masses. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Non-violent non-co-operation was the only alternative to anarchy and worse. Since it was to be non-violent, I had to put my life in the scale.

The fact that Hindus and Mussulmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting like cats and dogs in some places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw symptoms in Bombay, Chauri Chaura and in a host of minor cases. I did penance then. It had its effect *pro tanto*. But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable. It became unbearable on hearing of the Kohat tragedy. On the eve of my departure from Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do. I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me. Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive. I wrote to say that I should find it only by plodding. Empty prayer is "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." I little knew then that the remedy was to be this prolonged fast. And yet I know that the fast is not prolonged enough for quenching the agony of my soul. Have I erred, have I been impatient, have I compromised with evil? I may have done all these things or none of them. All I know is what I see before me. If real non-violence and truth had been practised by the people who are now fighting, the gory duelling that is now going on would have been impossible. My responsibility is clearly somewhere.

I was violently shaken by Amethi, Shambhar and Gulbarga.

I had read the reports about Amethi and Shambhar prepared by Hindu and Mussulman friends. I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Mussulman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain. On Wednesday I knew the remedy. I must do penance. In the Satyagraha Ashram at the time of morning prayer we ask Shiva, God of Mercy, to forgive our sins knowingly or unknowingly committed. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unknowingly committed.

It is a warning to the Hindus and Mussulmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God. The world is watching—some with glee and some with sorrow—the dogfight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion—call it by what name you like—is made of sterner stuff. The penance of Hindus and Mussulmans is not fasting but retracing their steps. It is true penance for a Mussulman to harbour no ill-will for his Hindu brother and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Mussulman brother.

I ask of no Hindu or Mussulman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Mussulman not to fight for an earthly gain. I should be deeply hurt if my fast made the other community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast

is a matter between God and myself.

I did not consult friends—not even Hakim Saheb, who was closeted with me for a long time on Wednesday—not Maulana Mahomed Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality. When a man wants to make up with his Maker, he does not consult a third party. He ought not to. If he has any doubt about it he certainly must. But I had no doubt in my mind about the necessity of my step. Friends would deem it their duty to prevent me from undertaking the fast. Such things are not matters for consultation or argument. They are matters of feeling. When Rama decided to fulfil his obligation, he did not swerve from his resolve either by the weepings and wailings of his dear mother or the advice of his preceptors, or the entreaty of his people, or even certainty of his father's death if he carried out his resolve. These things are momentary. Hinduism would not have been much of a religion if Rama had not steeled his heart against every temptation. He knew that he had to pass through every travail, if he was to serve humanity and become a model for future generations.

But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussulman roof ? Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill-will against a single soul. My being under a Mussulman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussulman house.

And who is Mahomed Ali ? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him what was mine was his and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mahomed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of

every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Doctors Ansari and Abdur Rahman have constituted themselves my medical advisers. They examine me daily. I have had many happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

It has been whispered that by being so much with Mussulmans friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely I do not need to live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be a very poor thing if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Mussulman mind. The closer I come to the best of Mussulmans, the juster I am likely to be in my estimate of the Mussulmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussulmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so. My fast among other things is meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love.

BIRTH-CONTROL

It is not without the greatest hesitation and reluctance that I approach the subject. The question of using artificial methods for birth-control has been referred to me by correspondents ever since my return to India. Though I have answered them personally, I have never hitherto dealt with the subject publicly. My attention was drawn to the subject, now thirty-five years ago, when I was a student in England. There was then a hot controversy raging between a purist who would not countenance anything but natural means and a doctor who advocated artificial means. It was at that early time in my life that I became, after leanings for a brief period towards artificial means, a convinced opponent of them. I now observe that in some Hindi papers the methods are described in a revoltingly open manner which shocks one's sense of decency. I observe, too, that one writer does not hesitate to cite my name as among the supporters of artificial methods of birth-control. I cannot recall a single occasion when I spoke or wrote in favour of such methods. I have seen also two distinguished names having been used in support. I hesitate to publish them without reference to their owners.

There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth-control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or *brahmacharya*. It is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it. And medical men will earn the gratitude of mankind, if instead of devising artificial means of birth-control they will find out

the means of self-control. The union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny. And union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent.

Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless. And respectability that is being given to the methods must hasten the dissolution of the restraints that public opinion puts upon one. Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration. The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease. It is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts. It is good for a person who overeats to have an ache and a fast. It is bad for him to indulge his appetite and then escape the consequence by taking tonics or other medicine. It is still worse for a person to indulge in his animal passions and escape the consequences of his acts. Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws. Moral results can only be produced by moral restraints. All other restraints defeat the very purpose for which they are intended. The reasoning underlying the use of artificial methods is that indulgence is a necessity of life. Nothing can be more fallacious. Let those who are eager to see the birth regulated explore the lawful means devised by the ancients and try to find out how they can be revived. An enormous amount of spade-work lies in front of them. Early marriages are a fruitful source of adding to the population. The present mode of life has also a great deal to do with the evil of unchecked procreation. If these causes are investigated and dealt with, society will be morally elevated. If they are ignored by impatient zealots and if artificial methods become the order of the day, nothing but moral degradation can be the result. A society that has already become enervated through a variety of causes will become still further enervated by the adoption of artificial

methods. Those men therefore who are light-heartedly advocating artificial methods cannot do better than study the subject afresh, stay their injurious activity and popularize *brahmacharya* both for the married and the unmarried. That is the only noble and straight method of birth-control.

Young India, 12-3-1925

MY FRIEND THE REVOLUTIONARY

The revolutionary whom I endeavoured to answer some time ago*, has returned to the charge and challenges me to answer certain questions that arise out of my previous answers to him. I gladly do so. He seems to me to be seeking light, even as I am, and argues fairly and without much passion. So long as he continues to reason calmly, I promise to continue the discussion. His first question is :

Do you really believe that the revolutionaries of India are less sacrificing, less noble or less lovers of their country than the Swarajists, Moderates and the Nationalists ? May I challenge you to keep before the public the names of some Swarajists, Moderates or Nationalists who have embraced the death of a martyr for the sake of the motherland ? Can you be bold, nay, arrogant enough to deny it in the face of historical facts that the revolutionaries have sacrificed more for their country than any other party which professes to serve India ? You are ready to make compromises with other parties, while you abhor our party and describe their sentiments as poison. Will you not tremble to use the same word of intolerance for the sentiments of any other party which is decidedly inferior in the eyes of God and men to us ? What makes you shrink from calling them misguided patriots or venomous reptiles ?

I do not regard the revolutionaries of India to be less

*Vide "A Revolutionary's Defence", *Young India*, 12-2-1925.

sacrificing, less noble or less lovers of their country than the rest. But I respectfully contend that their sacrifice, nobility and love are not only a waste of effort, but being ignorant and misguided, do and have done more harm to the country than any other activity. For, the revolutionaries have retarded the progress of the country. Their reckless disregard of the lives of their opponents has brought on repression that has made those that do not take part in their warfare more cowardly than they were before. Repression does good only to those who are prepared for it. The masses are not prepared for the repression that follows in the trail of revolutionary activities and unwittingly strengthen the hands of the very Government which the revolutionaries are seeking to destroy. It is my certain conviction that had the Chauri Chaura murders not taken place the movement attempted at Bardoli would have resulted in the establishment of swaraj. Is it, therefore, any wonder that, with such opinion I call the revolutionary a misguided and therefore, dangerous patriot? I would call my son a misguided and dangerous nurse who, because of his ignorance and blind love, fought at the cost of his own life the physicians whose system of medicine no doubt did me harm but which I could not escape for want of will or ability. The result would be that I would lose a noble son and bring down upon my head the wrath of the physicians who, suspecting my complicity in the son's activities, might seek to punish me in addition to continuing their harmful course of treatment. If the son had attempted to convince the physicians of their error, or me of my weakness in submitting to the treatment, the physicians might have mended their way, or I might have rejected the treatment, or would, at least, have escaped the wrath of the physicians. I do make certain compromises with the other parties because, though I disagree with them, I do not regard their activities as positively harmful and dangerous as I regard the revolutionaries. I have

never called the revolutionaries "venomous reptiles". But I must refuse to fall into hysterics over their sacrifices, however great they may be, even as I must refuse to give praise to the sacrifice of my misguided son for his sacrifice in the illustration supposed by me. I feel sure that those who through insufficient reasoning or false sentiment, secretly or openly, give praise to the revolutionaries for their sacrifices, do harm to them and the cause they have at heart. The writer has asked me to quote instances of non-revolutionary patriots who gave their lives for the country. Well, two completed cases occur to me as I write these notes. Gokhale and Tilak died for their country. They worked in almost total disregard of their health and died much earlier than they need have. There is no necessary charm about death on the gallows; often such death is easier than a life of drudgery and toil in malarious tracts. I am quite satisfied that among the Swarajists and others there are men who will any day lay down their lives if they felt convinced that their death would bring deliverance to the country. I suggest to my friend, the revolutionary, that death on the gallows serves the country only when the victim is a "spotless lamb".

"India's path is not Europe's." Do you really believe it? Do you mean to say that warfare and organization of army was not in existence in India, before she came in contact with Europe? Warfare for fair cause—Is it against the spirit of India? *Vinashaya cha dushkritam*—Is it something imported from Europe? Granted that it is, will you be fanatic enough not to take from Europe what is good? Do you believe that nothing good is possible in Europe? If conspiracy, bloodshed and sacrifice for fair cause are bad for India, will they not be bad as well for Europe?

I do not deny that India had armies, warfare, etc., before she came in contact with Europe. But I do say that it never was the normal course of Indian life. The masses, were untouched by the warlike spirits. I have already said in these pages that I ascribe to the *Gita*, from which the writer has quoted the celebrated verse, a totally different meaning from that ordinarily given. I do not regard it as a description of, or an exhortation to, physical warfare. And, in any case, according to the verse quoted it is God the All Knowing Who descends to the earth to punish the wicked. I must be pardoned if I refuse to regard every revolutionary as an all-knowing God or an *avatar*. I do not condemn everything European. But I condemn, for all climes and for all times, secret murders and unfair methods even for a fair cause.

“India is not Calcutta and Bombay.” May I most respectfully put it before your Mahatmaship that the revolutionaries know the geography of India enough to be able to know this geographical fact easily. We hold this fact as much as we hold that a few spinners do not form the Indian nation. We are entering villages and have been successful everywhere. Can you not believe that they, the sons of Shivaji, Pratap and Ranjit, can appreciate our sentiments with more readiness and depth than anything else? Don't you think that armed and conspired resistance against something satanic and ignoble is infinitely more befitting for any nation, especially Indian, than the prevalence of effortless and philosophical cowardice? I mean the cowardice which is pervading the length and breadth of India owing to the preaching of your theory of non-violence or more correctly the wrong interpretation and misuse of it. Non-violence is not the theory of the weak and helpless, it is the theory of the strong. We want to

produce such men in India, who will not shirk from death—whenever it may come and in whatever form—will do the good and die. This is the spirit with which we are entering the villages. We are not entering the villages to extort votes for councils and district boards, but our object is to secure co-martyrs for the country who will die and a stone will not tell where his poor corpse lies. Do you believe like Mazzini that ideas ripen quickly, when nourished by the blood of martyrs ?

It is not enough to know the geographical difference between Calcutta and the villages outside the railways. If the revolutionaries knew the organic difference between these, they would, like me, become spinners. I own that the few spinners we have, do not make India. But I claim that it is possible to make all India spin as it did before, and so far as sympathy is concerned, millions are even now in sympathy with the movement, but they never will be with the revolutionary. I dispute the claim that the revolutionaries are succeeding with the villagers. But if they are, I am sorry. I shall spare no pains to frustrate their effort. Armed conspiracies against something Satanic is like matching Satan against Satan. But since one Satan is one too many for me, I would not multiply him. Whether my activity is effortlessness or all efforts, remains perhaps to be seen. Meanwhile, if it has resulted in making two yards of yarn spun where only one was spinning, it is so much to the good. Cowardice, whether philosophical or otherwise, I abhor. And if I could be persuaded that revolutionary activity has dispelled cowardice, it will go a long way to soften my abhorrence of the method, however much I may still oppose it on principle. But he who runs may see that owing to the non-violent movement, the villagers have assumed a boldness to which only a few years ago they were strangers. I admit that often cowardice is mis-

taken for non-violence.

My friend begs the question when he says a revolutionary is one who "does the good and dies". That is precisely what I question. In my opinion, he does the evil and dies. I do not regard killing or assassination or terrorism as good in any circumstances whatever. I do believe that ideas ripen quickly when nourished by the blood of martyrs. But a man who dies slowly of jungle fever in service bleeds as certainly as the one on the gallows. And if the one who dies on the gallows is not innocent of another's blood, he never had ideas that deserved to ripen.

One of your objections against the revolutionaries is that their movement is not a mass movement, consequently the mass at large will be very little benefited by the revolution, for which we are preparing. That is indirectly saying that we shall be most benefited by it. Is it really what you mean to say? Do you believe that these persons who are ever ready to die for their country—those mad lovers of their country—I mean the revolutionaries of India in whom the spirit of *nishkama karma* reigns, will betray their motherland and secure privileges for a life—this trifling life? It is true that we will not drag the mass just now in the field of action, because we know that it is weak, but when the preparation is complete, we shall call them in the open field. We profess to understand the present Indian psychology full well, because we daily get the chance of weighing our brethren along with ourselves. We know that the mass of India is after all Indian, it is not weak by itself but there is want of efficient leaders; so when we have begot the number of leaders required by constant propaganda and preaching, and the arms, we shall not shrink from calling, and if necessary, dragging the mass in the

open field to prove that they are the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Pratap and Govind Singh. Besides we have been constantly preaching that the mass is not for the revolution but the revolution is for the mass. Is it sufficient to remove your prejudice in this connection ?

I neither say nor imply that the revolutionary benefits if the masses do not. On the contrary, and as a rule, the revolutionary never benefits in the ordinary sense of the word. If the revolutionaries succeed in attracting, not "dragging", the masses to them, they will find that the murderous campaign is totally unnecessary. It sounds very pleasant and exciting to talk of "the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Pratap and Govind Singh". But is it true ? Are we all descendants of these heroes in the sense in which the writer understands it ? We are their countrymen, but their descendants are the military classes. We may, in future, be able to obliterate caste, but today it persists and therefore the claim put up by the writer cannot in my opinion be sustained.

Last of all, I shall ask you to answer these questions : Was Govind Singh a misguided patriot because he believed in warfare for noble cause ? What will you like to say about Washington, Garibaldi and Lenin ? What do you think of Kamal Pasha and De Valera ? Would you like to call Shivaji and Pratap well-meaning and sacrificing physicians who prescribed arsenic when they should have given fresh grape-juice ? Will you like to call Krishna Europeanized because he believed also in the *vinasha* of *dushkritas* ?

This is a hard or rather awkward question. But I dare not shirk it. In the first instance Guru Govind Singh and the others whose names are mentioned did not believe in secret

murder. In the second, these patriots knew their work and their men, whereas the modern Indian revolutionary does not know his work. He has not the atmosphere that the patriots mentioned had. Though my views are derived from my theory of life I have not put them before the nation on that ground. I have based my opposition to the revolutionaries on the sole ground of expedience. Therefore, to compare their activities with those of Guru Govind Singh or Washington or Garibaldi or Lenin would be most misleading and dangerous. But by test of the theory of non-violence, I do not hesitate to say that it is highly likely that had I lived as their contemporary and in the respective countries, I would have called everyone of them a misguided patriot, even though a successful and brave warrior. As it is, I must not judge them. I disbelieve history so far as details of acts of heroes are concerned. I accept broad facts of history and draw my own lessons for my conduct. I do not want to repeat it in so far as the broad facts contradict the highest laws of life. But I positively refuse to judge men from the scanty material furnished to us by history. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. Kamal Pasha and De Valera too I cannot judge. But for me, as a believer in non-violence out and out they cannot be my guides in life in so far as their faith in war is concerned. I believe in Krishna perhaps more than the writer. But my Krishna is the Lord of the universe, the creator, preserver and destroyer of us all. He may destroy because He creates. But I must not be drawn into a philosophical or religious argument with my friends. I have not the qualifications for teaching my philosophy of life. I have barely qualifications for practising the philosophy I believe. I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good, wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed, but ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. I admit, and assure my revolutionary friends, it is a painful climb but the pain of

it is a positive pleasure for me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next. But all that pain and the pleasure are for me. The revolutionaries are at liberty to reject the whole of my philosophy. To them I merely present my own experiences as a co-worker in the same cause even as I have successfully presented them to the Ali Brothers and many other friends. They can and do applaud whole-heartedly the action of Mustafa Kamal Pasha and possibly De Valera and Lenin. But they realize with me that India is not like Turkey or Ireland or Russia and that revolutionary activity is suicidal at this stage of the country's life at any rate, if not for all time, in a country so vast, so hopelessly divided and with the masses so deeply sunk in pauperism and so fearfully terror-struck.

Young India, 9-4-1925

POWER OF RAMANAMA

A correspondent asks the following question : *

I do not know the writer. The fact that he had the letter delivered to me through his brother when I was leaving Bombay shows the strength of his curiosity in this matter. Ordinarily, such questions should not be discussed in public. It is evident that, if it became the general practice with the public to probe into the private life of an individual, most unpleasant results would follow. But I cannot escape being the object of such curiosity, whether it is worthy or unworthy. I have no right to try to escape. Neither do I wish to do so. My private life has become public life. For my part there is not a single thing in the world which I would conceal from others. My experiments are spiritual. Some of them are novel. They depend very much on self-examination on my part. I have carried them out, following the maxim : "As in one's body, so in the universe." The underlying assumption is that what is possible to me must be so to all others. Hence I have to answer some questions about private matters too.

Moreover, I cannot resist the opportunity I have got, in answering this question, of explaining the power of

* Not reproduced here. The correspondent had mentioned Gandhiji's statement in a speech that he had thrice been saved from sin by Ramanama. Pointing out that a local paper, *Saurashtra*, had commented on this statement and drawn inferences which were not clear, he had asked Gandhiji himself to explain what he had meant.

Ramanama.

I should, however, like to request this correspondent and others who may put questions to me in future that, if they base their questions on newspaper reports, they should send me copies of the papers in question. I have often stated that I do not read newspapers for the simple reason that I am not able to do so. I do not know what *Saurashtra* has written. It is difficult to take notes of my speeches. Mahadevbhai does so, but I do not always approve the notes he takes. The reason is that when subtle or new ideas are being expressed, an error in reporting even one word may misrepresent the speaker's meaning. Hence, when reporters who are not familiar with my ideas take notes of my speeches, they can never be relied upon, and I have often asked readers not to depend on such reports. When they have a doubt about anything, they may ask me and, while doing so, they should also send me a copy of the newspaper in which they have read reports of my speeches.

With these prefatory remarks, even though I do not know what *Saurashtra* has said on the matter. I shall describe how I was saved on those three occasions by the grace of God. All the three occasions concern public women. I was taken to two of them by friends on different occasions.

On the first occasion, I went to the place out of false regard for the friend and, if God had not saved me, I would certainly have fallen. This time the woman whose house I had entered herself threw me out with contempt. I simply did not know what to say or how to behave in such a situation. Prior to this incident, I always regarded it as shameful even to sit near a public woman, so that I was trembling even when entering that house. After going in, I

could not even look at her face and I do not know what her face was like. What could that smart woman do to such a fool but turn him out? She said a few angry words to me and asked me to go away. At that time, of course, I did not realize that God had saved me. I left feeling miserable. I felt crest-fallen and even unhappy about my stupidity. I felt that I lacked manliness. It was later I realized that I had been shielded by my stupidity. God had saved me by making me behave like a fool. Else how could I, who had entered a house of ill-fame with evil intention, have been saved?

The second occasion was more dreadful than the first one. I was not so innocent then as I was at the time of the first incident, though I was of course more vigilant. Moreover, I had the protection of a vow administered to me by my revered mother. But this time the place was in England. I was in the very flush of youth. Two of us friends were lodged in one house. We had gone there only for a few days. The landlady was as good as a prostitute. Two or three of us sat down to play cards with her. In those days I used to play cards for innocent amusement. On this occasion too, we sat down to play, following the usual custom. The beginning was completely innocent. I, of course, did not know that the landlady lived on her body. But as the play warmed up, the atmosphere changed. The woman started making gestures. I was observing my friend. He had abandoned all restraints. I felt tempted. I was flushed in the face, for lust had entered me and I had become impatient.

But who can harm him whom Rama protects? To be sure, His name was not on my lips at that hour, but he ruled my heart. On my lips was the language of lust. My

good friend noticed my behaviour. We knew each other very well. He had seen me in difficult situations, in which I had, with an effort of will, kept my purity. But he saw that on this occasion evil had entered my mind and that, if the night progressed while I was in that mood. I too would fall like him.

It was this friend who first made me realize that even immoral men have good instincts. He felt unhappy to see me in that plight. I was younger than he. Rama came to my help through his person. He aimed arrows of love at me; "Moniya !" (This is an affectionate form of "Mohandas". I remember that I used to be called by that name by my mother, my father and the eldest cousin in our family. The fourth person to call me so was this friend who, through his goodness, proved a brother to me). "Moniya, be careful. You know that I have fallen. But I shall not let you fall. Recall the promise you have made to your mother. This thing is not for you. Be off from here. Go to bed. Are you gone ? Throw off the cards."

I do not remember whether I replied to him. I put down the cards. For a moment. I felt unhappy. I felt ashamed and my heart began to beat fast. I got up and went to bed.

I woke up. I started repeating the name of Rama. "How miraculously I have been saved, how he has saved me ! All honour to my promise ! All glory to my mother ! All glory to my friend ! All glory to Rama !" —I kept saying to myself. For me this was indeed a miracle. If my friend had not shot at me the invincible arrows of Rama, where would I have been today ?

He on whom Rama's arrows have lighted—
he knows what they are.

He on whom love's arrows have lighted—
he knows what they are.

For me, this was an occasion when I first became aware of the existence of God.

If today the whole of the world told me that there is no God, no Rama, I would say it lied. If I had fallen on that terrible night, I would not today be waging battles of satyagraha, would not be washing away the filth of untouchability, would not be repeating the holy name of the spinning-wheel, would not regard myself fit to be blessed by the *darshan* of millions of women, and would not be surrounded by hundreds of thousands of them who sit near me without fear as they sit around a child. I would always be running away from them, and they would have quite justifiably kept themselves at a distance from me. I look upon this occasion as the most perilous in my life. Seeking pleasure I learnt self-restraint. On the path to forsake Rama's name, I had his *darshan*. A miracle indeed.

O scion of Raghu's race, protect my honour,
I am a fallen man, old in my evil ways;
Take my boat safely to the other shore.

The third incident is amusing. During one of my journeys, I came into fairly close contact with the ship's captain, as also with an English passenger. In every port where the ship weighed anchor, the captain and some passengers would go and search for brothels. The captain once invited me to go with him and see the port. I did not know what that meant. We went and stood before a prosti-

tute's house. Then I knew what was meant by going to see a port. Three women were produced before us. I was completely taken aback, but felt too embarrassed to say anything. Nor could I run away. I had of course no wish to indulge in this immoral pleasure. Those two went into the rooms. The woman led me into her own room. While I was still thinking what I should do, the other two came out of the rooms. I do not know what that woman must have thought about me. She stood smiling before me, but that did not have the slightest effect on me. Since we spoke different languages, there was no question of my talking to her. Those friends shouted for me and so I went out. I certainly felt a little humiliated. They had seen that I was a fool in these matters. They even joked between themselves on this point. They pitied me of course. From that day, I was enrolled among fools of the world, as far as the captain was concerned. He never invited me again to see a port. If I had remained in the room longer or I had known that woman's language, I do not know what would have been my plight. But I certainly realized that day, too, I was not saved by my own power, but that it was God who had protected me by having made me stupid in such matters.

I remembered only these three incidents at the time of the speech in question. The reader should not think that I have not been through more of similar experiences. But I certainly wish to state that every time I escaped, thanks to Ramanama. God gives strength only to the weak who approach Him in utter helplessness.

So long as the elephant trusted to his own strength,
so long his efforts availed him not.

Let the weak appeal to Rama's strength,

He will come to help before the name is uttered
in full.

What, then, does this Ramanama mean? Is it something to be repeated parrot-like? Certainly not. If that were so, all of us would win deliverance by repeating it mechanically. Ramanama ought to be repeated from the depth of one's heart; it would not then matter if words are not pronounced correctly. The broken words which proceed from the heart are acceptable in God's court. Even though the heart cries out "*Mara mara*" *, this appeal of the heart will be recorded in one's credit column. On the contrary, though the tongue may pronounce the name of Rama correctly, if the lord of that heart is Ravana, the correct repetition of Rama's name will be recorded in one's debit column.

Tulsidas did not sing the glory of Ramanama for the benefit of the hypocrite who "has Rama's name on his lips and a knife under his arm". His wise calculations will go wrong, while the seeming errors of the man who has installed Rama in his heart will succeed. Rama alone can repair one's fortunes and so the poet Surdas, lover of God, sings :

Who will repair my fortunes ?

O who else but Rama ?

Everyone is a friend of his on whom good fortune
smiles,

None of his whom fortune has forsaken.

The reader, therefore, should understand clearly that Ramanama is a matter of the heart. Where speech and the mind are not in harmony with each other, mere speech is falsehood, no more than pretence or play of words. Such chanting may well deceive the world, but can Rama who dwells in man's heart be deceived? Hanuman broke open

* Rama pronounced in the reverse, meaning "dying, dying"

the beads in the necklace which Sita gave him as a gift, wanting to see whether they were inscribed with Rama's name. Some courtiers who thought themselves wise asked him why he showed disrespect to Sita's necklace. Hanuman's reply was that, if the beads were not inscribed with Rama's name inside, then every necklace given to him by Sita was a burden on him. The wise courtiers thereupon smilingly asked him if Rama's name was inscribed in his heart. Hanuman drew out his knife and, cutting open his chest, said : "Now look inside. Tell me if you see anything else there except Rama's name." The courtiers felt ashamed, Flowers rained on Hanuman from the sky, and from that day Hanuman's name is always invoked when Rama's story is recited.

This may be only a legend or a dramatist's invention. Its moral is valid for all time : only that which is in one's heart is true.

Navajivan, 17-5-1925

LONG LIVE DESHBANDHU !

I had the good fortune of being in Bombay when the Lokamanya passed away. Providence favoured me also on the day when Deshbandhu was cremated, or, rather, Fate seemed to have waited for the first lap of my tour to be over, for had the cremation taken place one day earlier, I would not have been able to witness the scene which I did in Calcutta.

Just as the citizens of Bombay had abandoned themselves to grief on the day of the Lokamanya's death, so did the people of Calcutta on this day. At that time, countless men and women had come out to have *darshan* to weep and express their love. Now, as then, there was no community or race whose members were not present to honour the departed. When the train arrived at the station, there was not an inch of space on the platform. People vied with one another for the honour of carrying Deshbandhu's bier, as they had for the Lokamanya's.

On both these occasions, it was the people's rule. The crowds were not ruled by the police, but the latter of their own free will were ruled by the people. The authority of the Government was voluntarily suspended and the people's rule was in force. On that day, people did what they chose. What Deshbandhu wanted to see people doing when he was alive, they did on the day of his leaving this world for the next.

Is this an object-lesson of small value ? Is there any-

thing which the bond of love will not make people do ? On that day, they "endured hardships, bore hunger and thirst, cold and heat", and did it all cheerfully. It was not necessary to plead with them and persuade them to suffer what they did.

No such crowds collect on the death of an emperor. People do not notice the death of a sannyasi, nor do papers and news agencies. Urged by what sense of duty, then, had the old and the young, men and women, the rich and poor, Hindus and Muslims gathered there, uninvited, in the twinkling of an eye ? It was their sense of duty to the nation. People will in these days describe only those who do this duty as men imbued with the spirit of dharma. They are even ready to forget the weakness of those who follow this dharma. There is some meaning in this. People are not foolish in acting thus. God alone is perfect. Every human being is liable to err. If, however, any person does his own proper duty to the best of his ability, his weaknesses will not be noticed and, as he goes on doing his duty, they will ultimately disappear.

National service is the only dharma today, for unless we follow that we can follow no other. The power of the State has penetrated every aspect of national life. In countries where the power of the State is the power of the people, the subjects are happy on the whole, and where the State is hostile to the people, the latter are miserable and utterly weak. In such countries the people lead a sinful life and call it good, for those who live in fear are incapable of goodness. To free ourselves from this paralysing fear, i.e., to learn the first lesson in self-realization, is what we call the dharma of national service. What have our patriotic leaders been teaching us ? That we should not fear even a king, that we

are men and men need fear God alone. Neither King George V nor his representatives can inspire fear in them. The Lokamanya had abandoned all fear of the State's machinery of law and order and, therefore, he was the adored of the people, even of learned men, for he inspired them with courage. Deshbandhu had also completely shed fear of the Government. To his mind the Viceroy and the gate-keeper were equal. He had seen with his inner eye that, everything considered, there was no difference between the two. If it is unmanly to fear the Viceroy, so is it to try to overcome the gate-keeper. There is profound spiritual vision behind this attitude, and that is the meaning of the dharma of national service. For this reason, consciously or unconsciously and even against their will, people look with reverence upon those who follow this dharma. The Lokamanya was a Brahmin. His knowledge of the scriptures was such as humbled the pride of pundits. But he was not adored for that knowledge of his. Deshbandhu was not a Brahmin. He was a Viasya. But people never thought about what caste he belonged to. Deshbandhu did not know Sanskrit and had not studied the scriptures. He merely followed the dharma of national service. He had made himself completely fearless. That is why even learned men bowed to him and, on that unforgettable day, they mingled their tears with the people's. The dharma of national service means all embracing love. It is not universal love, but it is an important facet of it. It is not the Dhaulagiri of love, but its Darjeeling. From Darjeeling, the visitor has a golden vision of Dhaulagiri and thinks to himself: 'If the Darjeeling of love is so beautiful as this, how much more beautiful must be its Dhaulagiri, which shines in the distance before me.' Love of one's country is not opposed to love of mankind, but is a concrete instance of it. It ultimately lifts one to the highest peak of universal love. That is why people shower blessings on those who are filled with patriotic love.

People know love of family, and are not therefore, moved to admiration by it. To some extent they also understand love of the village. But love of the country only a Deshbandhu or a Lokamanya can understand. People adore such men because they themselves want to be like them.

Deshbandhu's liberality knew no restraints. He earned lakhs and spent lakhs. He never refused to give, even borrowed and gave. He fought for the poor in courts without charging any fees. It is said that in Aurobindo Ghosh's case he exhausted himself and his resources for nine months. He spent from his own pocket and did not charge a single pie. This large-heartedness, too, was the result of his patriotism.

If he opposed me, it was certainly not that he wanted to harass me or undermine my position; he did so only for the sake of national service. He, who did not fear the Viceroy, was not likely to be afraid of me. His attitude was that if the activities of even his brother obstructed the progress of the country, he would oppose him. This should be the attitude of all of us. Our differences were like the differences between brothers. Neither of us wanted to part company with the other for ever. If we did, we would have shown ourselves wanting in patriotism. Hence, even when we seemed to drift away from each other, we were drawing closer. Our situation was a test of the quality of our hearts. Deshbandhu has passed that test, but I have still to show that I have passed it. I must keep undiminished my love for Deshbandhu and for other workers. If I fail in that, I shall have failed in the test.

Deshbandhu's progress, during the last three or four months of his life was marvellous. Many must have had

experience of his hot temper. His gentleness of which I had experience at Faridpur* went on increasing. The Faridpur speech was not written without due thought. It was a beautiful flower of mature thought. I observed him making progress even beyond that point. In Darjeeling, he had reached the fullest limit on this new direction. I am never weary of describing my experiences during those five days. Everything that he did and said seemed to breathe love. His optimism was becoming stronger. He could be caustic about his enemies but I found no evidence of this during those five days: In fact he spoke about many of them but I found no bitter word in anything he said. Sir Surendranath's opposition had remained unchanged, but even for him Deshbandhu had nothing but regard. He wanted to win over Sir Surendranath's heart. He wished that I, too, should try to do that. His advice was : "Try to win over as many as you can."

We talked at great length about how to carry on the struggle henceforward, what the Swaraj Party [should do and what place the spinning-wheel occupied in the programme. We also drew up a plan of work for Bengal. That may even be put into execution. But where are the men to carry it out ?

I left Darjeeling with a light heart. My fear had disappeared. I could see my path clearly before me—the path of swaraj. But now the horizon is overcast with clouds. I was in a fright when the Lokamanya passed away. So far I had to plead only with one, but from now on, I thought I would have to plead with many. I could explain my problems to

* Bengal Provincial Agricultural Conference was held at Faridpur in May 1925 under the presidentship of C. R. Das.

him and seek his help to solve them. Instead, I would now have to discuss them with several leaders, and even then, I know, they would not be able to solve them. The time had come when I had to wipe their tears.

The passing away of Deshbandhu has left me in greater difficulties. Deshbandhu meant Bengal. His consent was as good as a draft in my hand which I could cash without further difficulty. So far, my difficulties at the passing of Deshbandhu are similar to those at the passing away of the Lokamanya. But when the latter died, the path before us was clear. People had been filled with new hopes. They wanted to try their strength and make new experiments. Hindus and Muslims seemed to have become united.

But what is the position now ? The sky overhead and the earth below. I have no fresh ideas to put forward. Hindus and Muslims are getting ready to fight each other. In the name of religion, they seem to have forgotten the dharma of national service. Brahmins and non-Brahmins are also fighting with each other. The Government believes that it can now do what it likes in the country. Civil disobedience seems to be far away. At this time, one would feel the passing of any great soldier, but that of Das with his ten hands is a loss impossible to bear.

However, I believe in God and therefore, have not lost heart. God may sport with us as he wills. Why should we be miserable or happy because of anything He may do ? Why should it make any difference to us if events over which we have no control end in one way rather than in another ? I understand my duty. Maybe my understanding of it is wrong, but so long as I am convinced that it is my duty I should do it, and when I have done it my responsibility is over. I

console myself with such attempts at philosophical reflection. My selfishness simply does not let me forget that I shall see Deshbandhu no more.

But how can Deshbandhu die ? His physical frame has passed away. But can his virtues die ? They still live. If we cultivate them in ourselves, he lives in all of us. One who has served the world can never die. It is wrong to say that Rama and Krishna have left this world. Both live in the hearts of the thousands of their devotees. The same is true of Harishchandra and others. By Harishchandra we do not mean his physical body; we mean truth. He still lives in countless Harishchandras who serve truth. So does Deshbandhu. His mortal body has perished. His spirit of service, his liberality, his love of the country, his self-sacrifice, his fearlessness—can we say that these, too, have perished ? They will go on increasing in strength among the people, whether in greater or smaller measure.

And so Deshbandhu lives, though dead. As long as India lives, Deshbandhu lives. Let us, therefore, say, “Long live Deshbandhu !”

THE POET AND THE CHARKHA

When Sir Rabindranath's criticism of the charkha was published some time ago,* several friends asked me to reply to it. Being heavily engaged, I was unable then to study it in full. But I had read enough of it to know its trend. I was in no hurry to reply. Those who had read it were too much agitated or influenced to be able to appreciate what I might have then written even if I had the time. Now, therefore, is really the time for me to write on it and to ensure a dispassionate view being taken to the Poet's criticism or my reply, if such it may be called.

The criticism is a sharp rebuke to Acharya Ray for his impatience of the Poet's and Acharya Seal's position regarding the charkha, and gentle rebuke to me for my exclusive and excessive love for it. Let the public understand that the Poet does not deny its great economic value. Let them know that he signed the appeal for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial after he had written his criticism. He signed the appeal after studying its contents carefully and, even as he signed it, he sent me the message that he had written something on the charkha which might not quite please me. I knew, therefore, what was coming. But it has not displeased me. Why should mere disagreement with my views displease? If every disagreement were to displease, since no two men agree exactly on all point, life would be a bundle of unpleasant sensations and, therefore, a perfect unisance. On the contrary the frank criticism pleases me. For

* In *The Modern Review*, September, 1925

our friendship becomes all the richer for our disagreements. Friends to be friends are not called upon to agree even on most points. Only, disagreements must have no sharpness, much less bitterness, about them. And I gratefully admit that there is none about the Poet's criticism.

I am obliged to make these prefatory remarks as dame rumour has whispered that jealousy is the root of all that criticism. Such baseless suspicion betrays an atmosphere of weakness and intolerance. A little reflection must remove all ground for such a cruel charge. Of what should the Poet be jealous in me? Jealousy presupposes the possibility of rivalry. Well, I have never succeeded in writing a single rhyme in my life. There is nothing of the Poet about me. I cannot aspire after his greatness. He is the undisputed master of it. The world today does not possess his equal as a poet. My "mahatmaship" has no relation to the Poet's undisputed position. It is time to realize that our fields are absolutely different and at no point overlapping. The Poet lives in a magnificent world of his own creation—his world of ideas. I am a slave of somebody else's creation—the spinning-wheel. The Poet makes his *gopis* dance to the tune of his flute. I wander after my beloved Sita, the charkha, and seek to deliver her from the ten-headed monster from Japan, Manchester, Paris, etc. The Poet is an inventor—he creates, destroys and recreates. I am an explorer and having discovered a thing, I must cling to it. The Poet presents the world with new and attractive things from day to day. I can merely show the hidden possibilities of old and even worn-out things. The world easily finds an honourable place for the magician who produces new and dazzling things. I have to struggle labouriously to find a corner for my worn-out things. Thus there is no competition between us. But I may say in all humility that we complement each other's activity.

The fact is that the Poet's criticism is a poetic licence and he who takes it literally is in danger of finding himself in an awkward corner. An ancient poet has said that Solomon arrayed in all his glory was not like one of the lilies of the field. He clearly referred to the natural beauty and innocence of the lily contrasted with the artificiality of Solomon's glory and his sinfulness in spite of his many good deeds. Or take the poetical licence in : "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." We know that no camel has ever passed through the eye of a needle and we know too that rich men like Janaka have entered the Kingdom of Heaven. Or take the beautiful simile of human teeth being likened to the pomegranate seed. Foolish women who have taken the poetical exaggeration literally have been found to disfigure and harm their teeth. Painters and poets are obliged to exaggerate the proportions of their figure in order to give a true perspective. Those therefore who take the Poet's denunciation of the charkha literally will be doing an injustice to the Poet and an injury to themselves.

The Poet does not, he is not expected, he has no need, to read *Young India*. All he knows about the movement is what he has picked up from table talk. He has, therefore, denounced what he has imagined to be the excess of the charkha cult.

He thinks, for instance, that I want everybody to spin the whole of his or her time to the exclusion of all other activity, that is to say, that I want the poet to forsake his muse, the farmer his plough, the lawyer his brief and the doctor his lancet. So far is this from truth that I have asked no one to abandon his calling, but on the contrary, to adorn it by giving every day only thirty minutes to spinning as sacrifice for

the whole nation. I have, indeed, asked the famishing man or woman who is idle for want of any work whatsoever to spin for a living and the half-starved farmer to spin during his leisure hours to supplement his slender resources. If the Poet span half an hour daily his poetry would gain in richness. For it would then represent the poor man's wants and woes in a more forcible manner than now.

The Poet thinks that the charkha is calculated to bring about a death-like sameness in the nation, and, thus imagining, he intended to realize the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads. Behind the magnificent and kaleidoscopic variety, one discovers in nature a unity of purpose, design and form which is equally unmistakable. No two men are absolutely alike, not even twins, and yet there is much that is indispensably common to all mankind. And behind the commonness of form there is the same life pervading all. The idea of sameness or oneness was carried by Shankara to its utmost logical and natural limit and he exclaimed that there was only one truth, one God—*Brahman*—and all form, *nam, rupa* was illusion or illusory, evanescent. We need not debate whether what we see is unreal ; and whether the real behind the unreality is what we do not see. Let both be equally real, if you will. All I say is that there is sameness, identity or oneness behind the multiplicity and variety. And so do I hold that behind a variety of occupations there is an indispensable sameness also of occupation. Is not agriculture common to the vast majority of mankind ? Even so, was spinning common not long ago to a vast majority of mankind ? Just as both prince and peasant must eat and clothe themselves so must both labour for supplying their primary wants. The prince may do so if only by way of symbol and sacrifice, but that much is indispensable for him if he will be true to himself and his people. Europe may not realize this vital necessity

at the present moment, because it has made exploitation of non-European races a religion. But it is a false religion bound to perish in the near future. The non-European races will not for ever allow themselves to be exploited. I have endeavoured to show a way out that is peaceful, humane and, therefore, noble. It may be rejected if it is, the alternative is a tug of war, in which each will try to pull down the other. Then, when non-Europeans will seek to exploit the Europeans, the truth of the charkha will have to be realized. Just as, if we are to live, we must breathe not air imported from England nor eat food so imported, so may we not import cloth made in England. I do not hesitate to carry the doctrine to its logical limit and say that Bengal dare not import her cloth even from Bombay or from Banga Lakshmi. If Bengal will have her natural and free life without exploiting the rest of India or the world outside, she must manufacture her cloth in her own villages as she grows her corn there. Machinery has its place ; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. An improved plough is a good thing. But if, by some chance one man could plough up by some mechanical invention of his the whole of the land of India and control all the agricultural produce and if the millions had no other occupation, they would strave, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is, at the same time, ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes.

The Irish analogy does not take us very far. It is perfect in so far as it enables us to realize the necessity of economic co-operation. But Indian circumstances being different, the

method of working out co-operation is necessarily different. For Indian distress every effort at co-operation has to centre round the charkha if it is to apply to the majority of the inhabitants of this vast peninsula 1,900 miles long and 1,500 broad. A Sir Gangaram may give us a model farm which can be no model for the penniless Indian farmer, who has hardly two to three acres of land which every day runs the risk of being still further cut up.

Round the charkha, that is, amidst the people who have shed their idleness and who have understood the value of co-operation, a national servant would build up a programme of anti-malaria campaign, improved sanitation, settlement of village disputes, conservation and breeding of cattle and hundreds of other beneficial activities. Wherever charkha work is fairly established, all such ameliorative activity is going on according to the capacity of the villagers and the workers concerned.

It is not my purpose to traverse all the Poet's arguments in detail. Where the differences between us are not fundamental—and these I have endeavoured to state—there is nothing in the Poet's argument which I cannot endorse and still maintain my position regarding the charkha. The many things about the charkha which he has ridiculed I have never said. The merits I have claimed for the charkha remain undamaged by the Poet's battery.

One thing, and one thing only, has hurt me, the Poet's belief, again picked up from table talk, that I look upon Ram Mohan Roy as a "pigmy". Well, I have never anywhere described that great reformer as a pigmy, much less regarded him as such. He is to me as much a giant as he is to the Poet. I do not remember any occasion save one when I had to use

Ram Mohan Roy's name. That was on the Cuttack sands now four years ago. What I do remember having said was that it was possible to attain highest culture without Western education. And when someone mentioned Ram Mohan Roy, I remember having said that he was a pigmy compared to the unknown authors, say, of the Upanishads. This is altogether different from looking upon Ram Mohan Roy as a pigmy. I do not think meanly of Tennyson if I say that he was a pigmy before Milton or Shakespeare. I claim that I enhance the greatness of both. If I adore the Poet, as he knows I do in spite of differences between us, I am not likely to disparage the greatness of the man who made the great reform movement of Bengal possible and of which the Poet is one of the finest of fruits.

Young India, 5-11-1925

THE CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

December 1, 1925

The movement for the removal of untouchability in India is one of purification of Hinduism—a religion that is professed by nearly two hundred and forty million human beings. It is estimated that over forty million human beings are regarded as untouchables. This untouchability takes in the Southern parts of India the extreme form even of unapproachability and invisibility. Untouchability is refraining on the part of the so-called higher classes from touching those who are branded with the stigma of untouchability. Unapproachables are those whose approach within a stipulated distance pollutes the higher classes. The invisibles are those whose very sight defiles.

These outcastes of Hindu society are confined to what may be fitly described as ghettos. They are denied the usual services that in a well-ordered society are regarded as the right of every human being, such for instance as medical aid, the offices of barbers, washermen, etc. This suppression of a large number of human beings has left an indelible mark on the suppressors themselves and the canker of untouchability is eating into the vitals of Hinduism, so much so that it has degraded what was at one time a noble institution. I mean varnashrama, falsely or perhaps loosely rendered as caste. What was meant to be a scientific division of labour and occupation has become an elaborate system regulating interdining and intermarriage. One of the noblest

religions on earth has been reduced to a farcical code of dining and marriage rules.

Why then do I cling to a religion which tolerates such a curse ? For the simple reason that I do not regard it as an integral part of Hinduism which is described as the religion *par excellence* of truth and non-violence or love. I have tried to understand the Hindu scriptures, some in the originals, the rest through translations. I have tried in my humble way to live up to the teachings of that religion. After having studied Christianity, Islam and other great faiths of the world, I have found in Hinduism my highest comfort. I have not found any to be perfect. I have discovered superstition and error in the practice of all these faiths. It is enough therefore for me that I do not believe in untouchability. I can certainly find no warrant in the Hindu scriptures for the belief that a simple person becomes untouchable by reason of his birth in a particular family or clan. But if I must call myself a Hindu, as I do, I owe it to my faith as I owe it to my country to fight the evil of untouchability with my whole soul, counting no cost too much for achieving the reform.

Let not the reader imagine that I am the only reformer. There are hundreds of educated Indians, who take pride in calling themselves Hindus, fighting the evil with all their might. It is the accepted creed of the enlightened Hindus that swaraj is unattainable without the removal of the curse.

The way we are combating the sin is to demonstrate to the so-called higher classes the enormity of the wrong, and passing resolutions at mass meetings condemning the practice. The Congress has made the reform an integral part of its programme. The reformers seek also to improve the

condition of the suppressed classes by opening schools for their children, digging wells for them, pointing out to them the bad habits they have contracted through the criminal neglect of the higher classes, and so forth. Whenever it is found necessary as at Vykom even the direct method of satyagraha is being adopted. In no case is violence offered to blind orthodoxy but an attempt is being made to win them over by patient argument and loving service. The reformers suffer for their cause without imposing suffering on their opponents.

My conviction is that the effort is bearing fruit and that before long Hinduism will have purified itself of the sin of untouchability.

The Hindu, 19-1-1926

THREE VITAL QUESTIONS

A friend has asked me three questions* in a most humble spirit :

1. In accepting the fourfold division, I am simply accepting the laws of Nature, taking for granted what is inherent in human nature, and the law of heredity. We are born with some of the traits of our parents. The fact a human being is born only in the human species shows that some characteristics, i.e., caste is determined by birth. There is scope enough for freedom of the will inasmuch as we can to a certain extent reform some of our inherited characteristics. It is not possible in one birth entirely to undo the results of our past doings, and in the light of it, it is in every way right and proper to regard him as a Brahmin who is born of Brahmin parents. A Brahmin may by doing the deeds of a Shudra become a Shudra in this very birth, but the world loses nothing in continuing to treat him as a Brahmin. Caste as it exists today is no doubt a travesty of the original fourfold division which only defined men's different callings. And this trifling with it has been its undoing. But how can I, for that reason, discard the law of Nature which I see being fulfilled at every step ? I know that if I discard it, I would be rid of a lot trouble. But that would be an idle

* Not reproduced here in full, the questions briefly were : 1) Since Gandhiji believed that any man, irrespective of birth might have the qualities of any varna, why did he attach so much importance to birth ? 2) Since Gandhiji was a non-dualist could he be called an *anekantvadi* ? and 3) Since Gandhiji believed that God is impersonal why did he attribute a will to God and talk so often of God's will ?

short-cut. I have declared from the house-tops that a man's caste is no matter for pride, that no superiority attaches to any of the four divisions. A true Brahmin will feel it an honour to serve the lowliest of Shudras. In fact a Brahmin, to be a Brahmin, should have the qualities of a Kshatriya, a Vaishya and a Shudra plus his own. Only he should predominantly be a man of divine knowledge. But caste today is in the crucible, and heaven only knows, or perhaps the Brahmins know, the final result.

2. I am an *advaitist* and yet I can support *dvaitism* (dualism). The world is changing every moment, and is therefore unreal, it has no permanent existence. But though it is constantly changing, it has something about it which persists-and it is therefore to that extent real. I have therefore no objection to calling it real and unreal, and thus being called an *anekantavadi* or a *syadvadi*. But my *syadvada* is not the *syadvada* of the learned, it is peculiarly my own. I cannot engage in a debate with them. It has been my experience that I am always true from my point of view, and am often wrong from the point of view of my honest critics. I know that we are both right from our respective points of view. And this knowledge saves me from attributing motives to my opponents or critics. The seven blind men who gave seven different descriptions of the elephant were all right from their respective points of view, and wrong from the point of view of one another, and right and wrong from the point of view of the man who knew the elephant. I very much like this doctrine of the manyness of reality. It is this doctrine that has taught me to judge a Mussulman from his own standpoint and a Christian from his. Formerly I used to resent the ignorance of my opponents. Today I can love them because I am gifted with the eye to see myself as others see me and *vice versa*. I want to take the whole world in

the embrace of my love. My *anekantvada* is the result of the twin doctrines of *satya* and *ahimsa*.

3. I talk of God exactly as I believe Him to be. Why should I beguile people into error and work my own perdition? I seek no reward from them. I believe God to be creative as well as non-creative. This too is the result of my acceptance of the doctrine of the manyness of reality. From the platform of the Jain I prove the non-creative aspect of God, and from that of Ramanuja the creative aspect. As a matter of fact, we are all thinking of the Unthinkable, describing the Indescribable, seeking to know the Unknown, and that is why our speech falters, is inadequate and even often contradictory. Then why do the Vedas describe *Brahman* as "not this"? But if He or It is not this, He or It is. If we exist, if our parents and their parents have existed, then it is proper to believe in the Parent of the whole creation. If He is not, we are nowhere. And that is why all of us with one voice call *one* God differently as Paramatma, Ishwara, Shiva, Vishunu, Rama, Allah, Khuda, Dada Hormuzda, Jehovah, God, and infinite variety of names. He is *one* and yet many; He is smaller than an atom, and bigger than the Himalayas; He is contained even in in a drop of the ocean, and yet not even the seven seas can compass Him. Reason is powerless to know Him. He is beyond the reach or grasp of reason. But I need not labour the point. Faith is essential in this matter. My logic can make and unmake innumerable hypotheses. An atheist might floor me in a debate. But my faith runs so very much faster than my reason that I can challenge the whole world and say, "God is, was and ever shall be."

But those who want to deny His existence are at liberty to do so. He is merciful, and compassionate. He is not an

earthly king needing an army to make us accept His sway. He allows us freedom, and yet His compassion commands obedience to His will. But if anyone of us disdain to bow to His will, He says : "So be it. My sun will shine no less for thee, my clouds will rain no less for thee. I need not force thee to accept my sway." Of such a God let the ignorant dispute the existence. I am one of the millions of wise men who believe in Him and am never tired of bowing to Him and singing His glory.

Young India, 21-1-1926

ON BRAHMACHARYA

I am being inundated with letters on *brahmacharya* and means to its attainment. Let me repeat in different language what I have already said or written on previous occasions. *Brahmacharya* is not mere mechanical celibacy, it means complete control over all the senses and freedom from lust in thought, word and deed. As such it is the royal road to self-realization or attainment of *Brahman*.

The ideal *brahmachari* has not to struggle with sensual desire or desire for procreation; it never troubles him at all. The whole world will be to him one vast family, he will centre all his ambition in relieving the misery of mankind and the desire for procreation will be to him as gall and wormwood. He who has realized the misery of mankind in all its magnitude will instinctively know the fountain of strength in him, and he will ever persevere to keep it undefiled. His humble strength will command respect of the world, and he will wield an influence greater than that of the sceptred monarch.

But I am told that this is an impossible ideal, that I do not take count of the natural attraction between man and woman. I refuse to believe that the sensual affinity referred to here can be at all regarded as natural; in that case the deluge would soon be over us. The natural affinity between man and woman is the attraction between brother and sister, mother and son, or father and daughter. It is that natural attraction that sustains the world. I should find it impossible to live, much less carry on my work, if I did not regard the

whole of womankind as sisters, daughters or mothers. If I looked at them with lustful eyes, it would be the surest way to perdition.

Procreation is a natural phenomenon indeed, but within specific limits. A transgression of those limits imperils womankind, emasculates the race, induces disease, puts a premium on vice, and makes the world ungodly. A man in the grip of the sensual desire is a man without moorings. If such a one were to guide society, to flood it with his writings and men were to be swayed by them, where would society be? And yet we have the very thing today. Supposing a moth whirling round a light were to record the moments of its fleeting joy and we were to imitate it, regarding it as an exemplar, where would we be? No, I must declare with all the power I can command that sensual attraction even between husband and wife is unnatural. Marriage is meant to cleanse the hearts of the couple of sordid passions and take them nearer to God. Lustless love between husband and wife is not impossible. Man is not a brute. He has risen to a higher state after countless births in brute creation. He is born to stand, not to walk on all fours or crawl. Bestiality is as far removed from manhood, as matter from spirit.

In conclusion I shall summarize the means to its attainment.

The first step is the realization of its necessity.

The next is gradual control of the senses. A *brahmachari* must needs control his palate. He must eat to live, and not for enjoyment. He must see only clean things and close his eyes before anything unclean. It is thus a sign of polite breeding to walk with one's eyes towards the ground and not

wandering about from object to object. A *brahmachari* will likewise hear nothing obscene or unclean, smell no strong, stimulating things. The smell of clean earth is far sweeter than the fragrance of artificial scents and essences. Let the aspirant to *brahmacharya* also keep his hands and feet engaged in all the waking hours in healthful activity. Let him also fast occasionally.

The third step is to have clean companions—clean friends and clean books.

The last and not the least is prayer. Let him repeat Ramanama with all his heart regularly every day, and ask for divine grace.

None of these things are difficult for an average man or woman. They are simplicity itself. But their very simplicity is embarrassing. Where there is a will, the way is simple enough. Men have not the will for it and hence vainly grope. The fact that the world rests on the observance, more or less, of *brahmacharya* or restraint, means that it is necessary and practicable.

Young India, 29-4-1926

WHAT IS PRAYER ?

A medical graduate asks :

What is the best form of prayer ? How much time should be spent at it ? In my opinion to do justice is the best form of prayer and one who is sincere about doing justice to all does not need to do any more praying. Some people spend a long time over *sandhya* and 95% of them do not understand the meaning of what they say. In my opinion prayer should be said in one's mother tongue. It alone can affect the soul best. I should say that a sincere prayer for one minute is enough. It should suffice to promise God not to sin.

Prayer means asking God for something in a reverent attitude. But the word is used also to denote any devotional act. Worship is a better term to use for what the correspondent has in mind. But definition apart, what is it that millions of Hindus, Mussulmans, Christians and Jews and others do every day during the time set apart for the adoration of the Maker ? It seems to me that it is a yearning of the heart to be one with the Maker, an invocation for His blessing. It is in this case the attitude that matters, not words uttered or muttered. And often the association of words that have been handed down from ancient times has an effect which in their rendering into one's mother tongue they will lose altogether. Thus the *Gayatri* translated and recited in, say, Gujarati, will not have the same effect as the original. The utterance of the word "Rama" will instantaneously affect

millions of Hindus, when the word "God", although they may understand the meaning, will leave them untouched. Words after all acquire a power by long usage and sacredness associated with their use. There is much therefore to be said for the retention of the old Sanskrit formulae for the most prevalent *mantras* or verses. That the meaning of them should be properly understood goes without saying.

There can be no fixed rule laid down as to the time these devotional acts should take. It depends upon individual temperament. These are precious moments in one's daily life. The exercises are intended to sober and humble us and enable us to realize that nothing happens without His will and that we are but "clay in the hands of the Potter". These are moments when one reviews one's immediate past, confesses one's weakness, asks for forgiveness and strength to be and do better. One minute may be enough for some, twenty-four hours may be too little for others. For those who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labour is to pray. Their life is one continuous prayer or act of worship. For those others who act only to sin, to indulge themselves, and live for self, no time is too much. If they had patience and faith and the will to be pure, they would pray till they feel the definite purifying presence of God within them. For us ordinary mortals there must be a middle path between these two extremes. We are not so exalted as to be able to say that all our acts are a dedication nor perhaps are we so far gone as to be living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. Unfortunately these have nowadays become merely mechanical and formal, where they are not hypocritical. What is necessary therefore is the correct attitude to accompany these devotions.

For definite personal prayer in the sense of

asking God for something, it should certainly be in one's own tongue. Nothing can be grander than to ask God to make us act justly towards everything that lives.

Young India, 10-6-1926

A DIFFICULT QUESTION

A teacher asks :*

I venture to answer this question because I am myself a sort of teacher and because I have carried out, and am still carrying out, several experiments in that field. This question has been raised by a fellow-teacher. This and similar other questions have been pending with me for a long time now. The friend in question does not insist on the reply being given through *Navajivan*. Considering, however, that a number of teachers seek help from me in solving such difficulties, and some of them may find guidance from my ideas on this subject, I have thought it fit to answer it through *Navajivan*.

Personally, I believe in the Puranas as sacred books and also in gods and goddesses. But I do not believe in them in the same way as the interpreters of the Puranas do and want others to do. I know too that I do not believe in them as society in general does at present. I do not believe that gods like Indra, Varuna, and others reside in the sky and that they are separate individuals, or even that goddesses like Saraswati and others are separate entities. But I certainly believe that gods and goddesses represent the various powers. Their descriptions are sheer poetry. There

* The question is not reproduced here. It related to the symbolism behind the puranic stories of gods and goddesses and the attitude which the teachers should adopt in regard to these legends.

is a place for poetry in religion. The Hindu religion has lent to everything that we believe in a scriptural form. In a way, all those who believe that God has innumerable powers may be said to believe in gods and goddesses. Just as God has innumerable powers, He has innumerable forms also. One should worship Him by the name and in the form one likes. I do not think there is anything wrong in that. Whenever and wherever necessary, the symbols and metaphors may be explained and their inner meaning made clear to the children. I for one would not feel any hesitation in doing so. I have not known any harmful result flowing from this. I would certainly not lead the children in any wrong direction. I find no difficulty in accepting that the Himalayas are God Shiva and that the Ganga, in the form of Parvati, rises and flows from his matted hair. Not only that, these ideas strengthen my belief in God and it enables me to understand better that everything is pervaded by God. One may interpret stories like the churning of the ocean and so on in the way one likes. Care should, however, be taken to see that the interpretation offered helps in inculcating good morals and noble conduct. Scholars have indeed offered such interpretations according to their intelligence. But it is not to be supposed that these are the only interpretations possible. Just as there is a process of development in man, even so there is a process of development in the meaning of words and sentences. As our intelligence and heart develop, the meaning of words and sentences must also develop and so it does. Where people limit the meaning within narrow confines and build walls all round, it cannot but decay and deteriorate. The meaning and its interpreter both develop together. And everybody will continue, according to his feeling, to draw his own meaning. Those whose minds are impure will see in the *Bhagavata* the delineation of promiscuity, while it was only a vision of the *atman* alone that Ekanath could get out of it. I firmly believe

the author of the *Bhagavata* did not write it to encourage promiscuity. But if those of the present day find in it anything repugnant to their moral sense, they should certainly reject it. To believe that all that is in print—especially if it is in Sanskrit—is true religion is nothing but blind superstition or stupidity.

Therefore, I know but one golden rule by which to solve this problem and I place it before teachers : We must reject everything—be it in the Vedas, the Puranas, or any other religious book—that is in our view inconsistent, with truth, or is likely to encourage vice. I may mention here an experience that I had while in jail. I had often heard people praising the *Gita-Govinda* of Jayadeva. I wished to read it some day. This poem might have provided enjoyment to many, but for me its reading proved a torture. I did read it but its description pained me. I would not at all hesitate to admit that the fault might have been entirely mine. But I have stated my position merely for the satisfaction of the reader. Since the *Gita-Govinda* did not produce a good effect on my mind, it became unreadable for me and I could reject it because I had my own independent standard to go by in such circumstances. Only those things are to be deemed religiously instructive which make for the elimination of evil thoughts and for the lessening of passions like hatred, only those things whose study would make one stick to truth even when mounting the gallows. The *Gita-Govinda* did not pass this test and therefore it became for me a book to be rejected.

There are today amongst us a number of youths and even old people who think that a thing is worth doing merely because it has been laid down in the Shastras. This will easily lead to our moral degradation. We do not even

know what exactly can be called the Shastras. If we believe that whatever goes on in the name of the Shastras is dharma and carry on accordingly, it is bound to lead to undesirable results. Take *Manusmriti* only, for example. I do not know which of its verses are genuine and which are interpolations. But there are quite a few which cannot be defended as religious in their import. We must reject such verses. I am a great admirer of Tulsidas. And I consider the *Ramayana* to be his greatest work. But I cannot subscribe to the idea contained in the couplet : "The drum, the village-fool, the Shudras, animals, women—all these are fit to be beaten." Because Tulsidas, influenced by the ideas prevalent in his time, has expressed this view, it would not be just for me to take to beating the so-called Shudras or my wife or even the animals whenever I find them not submitting to my control.

Now I think that the answer to the question raised above becomes clear. I do not see the slightest difficulty in narrating the story of the gods and goddesses to the extent that it helps in promoting good conduct. I do not say that if the symbol is laid bare and the inner meaning brought out, the children lose interest in the stories. Assuming, however, that they do lose interest, I cannot approve of the practice of sustaining interest at the cost of truth. We should place before children whatever *rasa* there is in truth. It is my experience that this *rasa* can be expressed and communicated. First the children must be told clearly that there has never yet been in the world a ten-headed demon and that there is no possibility of one occurring hereafter. When this has been made clear, it will be no repudiation of truth or loss of interest if we narrate the story of Ravana as if he really did once exist. The children do understand that the ten-headed monster Ravana is no other than the evil desires inside us

which have not only ten but a thousand heads. In Aesop's Fables birds and animals speak. The children know that birds and animals cannot speak and yet their delight in his stories is not one whit the less on that account.

Navajivan, 18-7-1926

MY VOW OF BRAHMACHARYA

After full discussion and mature deliberation I took the vow in 1906. I had not shared my thoughts with my wife until then, but only consulted her at the time of taking the vow. She had no objection. But I had great difficulty in making the final resolve. I had not the necessary strength. How was I to control my passions ? The elimination of carnal relationship with one's wife seemed then a strange thing. But I launched forth with faith in the sustaining power of God.

As I look back upon the twenty years of the vow, I am filled with pleasure and wonderment. The more or less successful practice of self-control had been going on since 1901. But the freedom and joy that came to me after taking the vow had never been experienced before 1906. Before the vow I had been open to being overcome by temptation at any moment. Now the vow was a sure shield against temptation. The great potentiality of *brahmacharya* daily became more and more potent to me. The vow was taken when I was in Phoenix. As soon as I was free from ambulance work, I went to Phoenix, whence I had to return to Johannesburg. In about a month of my returning there, the foundation of satyagraha was laid. As though unknown to me, the *brahmacharya* vow had been preparing me for it. Satyagraha had not been a preconceived plan. It came on spontaneously, without my having willed it. But I could see that all my previous steps had led up to that goal. I had cut down my heavy household expenses at Johannesburg and gone to Phoenix to take, as it were, the *brahmacharya* vow.

The knowledge that a perfect observance of *brahmacharya* means realization of *brahman* I did not owe to a study of the Shastras. It slowly grew upon me with experience. The Shastric texts on the subject I read only later in life. Every day of the vow has taken me nearer the knowledge that in *brahmacharya* lies the protection of the body, the mind and the soul. For *brahmacharya* was now on a process of hard penance, it was a matter of consolation and joy. Every day revealed a fresh beauty in it.

But if it was a matter of ever-increasing joy, let no one believe that it was an easy thing for me. Even when I am past fifty-six years, I realize how hard a thing it is. Every day I realize more and more that it is like walking on the sword's edge, and I see every moment the necessity for eternal vigilance.

Control of the palate is the first essential in the observance of the vow. I found that complete control of the palate made the observance very easy, and so I now pursued my dietetic experiments not merely from the vegetarian's but also from the *brahmachari's* point of view. As a result of these experiments I saw that the *brahmachari's* food should be limited, simple, spiceless, and, if possible, uncooked.

Six years of experiment have showed me that the *brahmachari's* ideal food is fresh fruit and nuts. The immunity from passion that I enjoyed when I lived on this food was unknown to me after I changed that diet. *Brahmacharya* needed no effort on my part in South Africa when I lived on fruit and nuts alone. It has been a matter of very great effort ever since I began to take milk. I have not the least doubt that milk diet makes the *brahmacharya* vow difficult to observe. Let no one deduce from this that all *brahmacharis* must give up milk. The effect

on *brahmacharya* of different kinds of food can be determined only after numerous experiments. I have yet to find a fruit-substitute for milk which is an equally good muscle-builder and easily digestible. The doctors, vaidyas and hakims have alike failed to enlighten me. Therefore, though I know milk to be partly a stimulant, I cannot, for the time being, advise anyone to give it up.

As an external aid to *brahmacharya*, fasting is as necessary as selection and restriction in diet. So overpowering are the senses that they can be kept under control only when they are completely hedged in on all sides, from above and from beneath. It is common knowledge that they are powerless without food, and so fasting undertaken with a view to control of senses is, I have no doubt, very helpful. With some fasting is of no avail, because assuming that mechanical fasting alone will make them immune, they keep their bodies without food, but feast their minds upon all sorts of delicacies, thinking all the while what they will eat and what they will drink after the fast terminates. Such fasting helps them in controlling neither palate nor lust. Fasting is useful, when mind co-operates with starving body, that is to say, when it cultivates a distaste for the objects that are denied to the body. Mind is at the root of all sensuality. Fasting, therefore, has a limited use, for a fasting man may continue to be swayed by passion. But it may be said that extinction of the sexual passion is as a rule impossible without fasting, which may be said to be indispensable for the observance of *brahmacharya*. Many aspirants after *brahmacharya* fail, because in the use of other senses they want to carry on like those who are not *brahmacharis*. Their effort is, therefore, identical with the effort to experience the bracing cold of winter in the scorching summer months. There should be a clear line between the life of a *brahmachari* and of one who is not. The resemblance

that there is between the two is only apparant. The distinction ought to be clear as daylight. Both use their eyesight, but whereas the *brahmachari* uses it to see the glories of God, the other uses it to see the frivolity around him. Both use their ears, but whereas the one hears nothing but praises of God, the other feasts his ears upon ribaldry. Both often keep late hours, but whereas the one devotes them to prayer, the other fritters them away in wild and wasteful mirth. Both feed the inner man, but the one only to keep the temple of God in good repair, while the other gorges himself and makes the sacred vessel a stinking gutter. Thus both live as the poles apart, and the distance between them will grow and not diminish with the passage of time.

Brahmacharya means control of the senses in thought, word and deed. Every day I have been realizing more and more the necessity for restraints of the kind I have detailed above. There is no limit to the possibilities of renunciation even as there is none to those of *brahmacharya*. Such *brahmacharya* is impossible of attainment by limited effort. For many it must remain only as an ideal. An aspirant after *brahmacharya* will always be conscious of his shortcomings, will seek out the passions lingering in the innermost recesses of his heart and will incessantly strive to get rid of them. So long as thought is not under complete control of the will, *brahmacharya* in its fulness is absent. Involuntary thought is an affection of the mind, and curbing of thought, therefore, means curbing of the mind which is even more difficult to curb than the wind. Nevertheless the existence of God within makes even control of the mind possible. Let no one think that it is impossible because it is difficult. It is the highest goal, and it is no wonder that the highest effort should be necessary to attain it.

But it was after coming to India that I realized that such

brahmacharya was impossible to attain by mere human effort. Until then I had been labouring under the delusion that fruit diet alone would enable me to eradicate all passions, and I had flattered myself with the belief that I had nothing more to do.

But I must not anticipate the chapter of my struggle. Meanwhile let me make it clear that those who desire to observe *brahmacharya* with a view to realizing God need not despair, provided their faith in God is equal to their confidence in their own effort.

“The sense-objects turn away from an abstemious soul, leaving the relish behind. The relish also disappears with the realization of the Highest.”* Therefore His name and His grace are the last resources of the aspirant after *moksha*. This truth came to me only after my return to India.

The Story of My Experiments with Truth; also Young India, 27-12-1927

* *Bhagavadgita*, II 59,

TEAR DOWN THE PURDAH

Whenever I have gone to Bengal, Bihar or the United Provinces, I have observed the *purdah* system more strictly followed than in the other Provinces. But when I addressed a meeting at Darbhanga late at night and amid calm surroundings free from noise and bustle and unmanageable crowds, I found in front of me men, but behind me and behind the screen were women of whose presence I knew nothing till my attention was drawn to it. The function was in connection with the laying of the foundation-stone of an orphanage, but I was called upon to address the ladies behind the *purdah*. The sight of the screen behind which my audience whose numbers I did not know was seated made a barbarous custom which, whatever use it might have had when it was first introduced, had now become totally useless and was doing incalculable harm to the country. All the education that we have been receiving for the past 100 years seems to have produced but little impression upon us, for I note that the *purdah* is being retained even in educated households not because the educated men believe in it themselves but because they will not manfully resist the brutal custom and sweep it away at a stroke. I have the privilege of addressing hundreds of meetings of women, attended by thousands. The din and the noise created at these meetings, make it impossible to speak with any effect to the women who attend them. Nothing better is to be expected so long as they are caged and confined in their houses and little courtyards. When therefore they find themselves congregated in a big room and are expected all of a sudden to listen to someone, they do not know what to do with themselves or with the speaker. And

when silence is restored it becomes difficult to interest them in many everyday topics, for they know nothing of them having been never allowed to breathe the fresh air of freedom. I know that this is a somewhat exaggerated picture. I am quite aware of the very high culture of these thousands of sisters whom I get the privilege of addressing. I know that they are capable of rising to the same height that men are capable of, and I know too that they do have occasions to go out. But this is not to be put down to the credit of the educated classes. The question is, why have they not gone further? Why do not our women enjoy the same freedom that men do? Why should they not be able to walk out and have fresh air?

Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the *purdah*. It must grow from within, and to be worth anything it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation. It must be as defiant as Sita's. It must be a very poor thing that cannot stand the gaze of men. Men, to be men, must be able to trust their womenfolk, even as the latter are compelled to trust them. Let us not live with one limb completely or partially paralysed. Rama would be nowhere without Sita, free and independent even as he was himself. But for robust independence Draupadi is perhaps a better example. Sita was gentleness incarnate. She was a delicate flower. Draupadi was a giant oak. She bent mighty Bhima himself to her imperious will. Bhima was terrible to everyone, but he was a lamb before Draupadi. She stood in no need of protection from anyone of the Pandavas. By seeking today to interfere with the growth of the womanhood of India we are interfering with the growth of free and independent-spirited men. What we are doing to our women and what we are doing to the untouchables recoils upon our

heads with a force thousands time multiplied. It partly accounts for our weakness, indecision, narrowness and helplessness. Let us then tear down the *purdah* with one mighty effort.

Young India, 3-2-1927

MY BEST COMRADE GONE

He whom I had singled out as heir to my all is no more. Maganlal K. Gandhi, a grandson of an uncle of mine had been with me in my work since 1904. Maganlal's father has given all his boys to the cause. The deceased went early this month to Bengal with Shri Jamnalalji and others, contracted a high fever whilst he was on duty in Bihar and died under the protecting care of Brijakishore Prasad in Patna after an illness of nine days and after receiving all the devoted nursing that love and skill could give.

Maganlal Gandhi went with me to South Africa in 1903 in the hope of making a bit of a fortune. But hardly had he been store-keeping for one year, when he responded to my sudden call to self-imposed poverty, joined the Phoenix settlement and never once faltered or failed after so joining me. If he had not dedicated himself to the country's service, his undoubted abilities and indefatigable industry would have made him a merchant prince. Put in a printing press he easily and quickly mastered the secrets of the art of printing. Though he had never before handled a tool or a machine, he found himself at home in the engine room, the machine room and at the compositor's desk. He was equally at ease with the Gujarati editing of the *Indian Opinion*. Since the Phoenix scheme included domestic farming, he became a good farmer. His was I think the best garden at the settlement. It may be of interest to note that the very first issue of *Young India* published in Ahmedabad bears the marks of his labours when they were much needed.

He had a sturdy constitution which he wore away in advancing the cause to which he had dedicated himself. He closely studied and followed my spiritual career and when I presented to my co-workers *brahmacharya* as a rule of life even for married men in search of Truth, he was the first to perceive the beauty and the necessity of the practice, and though it cost him to my knowledge a terrific struggle, he carried it through to success, taking his wife along with him by patient argument instead of imposing his views on her.

When satyagraha was born, he was in the forefront. He gave me the expression which I was striving to find to give its full meaning to what the South African struggle stood for, and which for want of a better term I allowed to be recognized by the very insufficient and even misleading term "passive resistance". I wish I had the very beautiful letter he then wrote to me giving his reasons for suggesting the name *sadagraha* which I changed to satyagraha. He argued out the whole philosophy of the struggle step by step and brought the reader irresistibly to his chosen name. The letter I remember was incredibly short and to the point as all his communications always were.

During the struggle he was never weary of work, shirked no task and by his intrepidity he infected everyone around him with courage and hope. When everyone went to jail, when at Phoenix courting imprisonment was like a prize to be won at my instance, he stayed back in order to shoulder a much heavier task. He sent his wife to join the women's party.

On our return to India, it was he again who made it possible to found the Ashram in the austere manner in which it was founded. Here he was called to a newer and more

difficult task. He proved equal to it. Untouchability was a very severe trial for him. Just for one brief moment his heart seemed to give way. But it was only for a second. He saw that love had no bounds and that it was necessary to live down the ways of "untouchables", if only because the so-called higher castes were responsible for them.

The mechanical department of the Ashram was not a continuation of the Phoenix activity. Here we had to learn weaving, spinning, carding, and ginning. Again I turned to Maganlal. Though the conception was mine, his were the hands to reduce it to execution. He learnt weaving and all the other processes that cotton had to go through before it became khadi. He was a born mechanic.

When dairying was introduced in the Ashram he threw himself with zeal in the work, studied dairy literature, named every cow and became friends with every cattle on the settlement.

And when tannery was added, he was undaunted and had proposed to learn the principles of tanning as soon as he got a little breathing time. Apart from his scholastic training in the High School at Rajkot, he learnt the many things he knew so well in the school of hard experience. He gathered knowledge from village carpenters, village weavers, farmers, shepherds and such ordinary folk.

He was the Director of the Technical Department of the Spinners' Association and during the recent floods in Gujarat, Vallabhbhai put him in charge of building the new township Vithalpur.

He was an exemplary father. He trained his children,

—one boy and two girls, all unmarried still,—so as to make them fit for dedication to the country. His son Keshu is showing very great ability in mechanical engineering all of which he has picked up like his father from seeing ordinary carpenters and smiths at work. His eldest daughter Radha eighteen years old recently shouldered a difficult and delicate mission to Bihar in the interest of women's freedom. Indeed he had a good grasp of what national education should be and often engaged the teachers in earnest and critical discussion over it.

Let not the reader imagine that he knew nothing of politics. He did, but he chose the path of silent, selfless constructive service.

He was my hands, my feet and my eyes. The world knows so little of how much my so-called greatness depends upon the incessant toil and drudgery of silent, devoted, able and pure workers, men as well as women. And among them all Maganlal was to me the greatest, the best and purest.

As I am penning these lines, I hear the sobs of the widow bewailing the death of her dear husband. Little does she realize that I am more widowed than she. And but for a living faith in God, I should become a raving maniac for the loss of one who was dearer to me than my own sons, who never once deceived me or failed me, who was a personification of industry, who was the watchdog of the Ashram in all its aspects—material, moral and spiritual. His life is an inspiration for me, a standing demonstration of the efficacy and the supremacy of the moral law. In his own life he proved visibly for me not for a few days, not for a few months, but for twenty-four long years—now, alas, all too short—that service of the country, service of humanity and

self-realization or knowledge of God are synonymous terms.

Maganlal is dead, but he lives in his works whose imprints he who runs may read on every particle of dust in the Ashram

Young India, 26-4-1926

FACE TO FACE WITH AHIMSA

My object was to inquire into the condition of the Champaran agriculturists and understand their grievances against the indigo planters. For this purpose it was necessary that I should meet thousands of the ryots. But I deemed it essential, before starting on my inquiry, to know the planters' side of the case and see the Commissioner of the Division and the Secretary of the Planters Association. I sought and was granted appointments with both.

The Secretary of the Planters' Association told me plainly that I was an outsider and that I had no business to come between the planters and their tenants, but if I had any representation to make, I might submit it in writing. I politely told him that I did not regard myself as an outsider and that I had every right to inquire into the condition of the tenants if they desired me to do so.

The Commissioner, on whom I called, proceeded to bully me and advised me forthwith to leave Tirhut.

I acquainted my co-workers with all this and told them that there was a likelihood of Government stopping me from proceeding further and that I might have to go to jail earlier than I had expected and that if I was to be arrested, it would be best that the arrest should take place in Motihari or if possible in Bettiah. It was advisable, therefore, that I should go to those places as early as possible.

Champaran is a district of the Tirhut Division and Motihari is its headquarters. Rajkumar Shukla's place was in the vicinity of Bettiah and the tenants belonging to the *kothis* in its neighbourhood were the poorest in the district. Rajkumar Shukla wanted me to see them and I was equally anxious to do so.

So I started with my co-workers for Motihari the same day. Babu Gorakh Prasad harboured us in his home which became a caravanserai. It could hardly contain us all. The very same day we heard that about five miles from Motihari a tenant had been ill-treated. It was decided that in company with Babu Dharanidhar Prasad I should go and see him the next morning and we accordingly set off for the place on elephant's back. An elephant by the way is about as common in Champaran as a bullock-cart in Gujarat. We had scarcely gone half way when a messenger from the Police Superintendent overtook us and said that the latter had sent his compliments. I saw what he meant. Having left Dharanidharbabu to proceed to the original destination, I got into the hired carriage which the messenger had brought. He then served on me a notice to leave Champaran and drove me to my place. On his asking me to acknowledge the service of the notice, I wrote to the effect that I did not propose to comply with it and leave Champaran till my inquiry was finished. Thereupon I received a summons to take my trial the next day for disobeying the order to leave Champaran.

I kept awake that whole night writing letters and giving necessary instructions to Babu Vrajakishore Prasad.

The news of the notice and the summons spread like wildfire, and I was told that Motihari that day witnessed

unprecedented scenes. Gorakhababu's house and the court house overflowed with men. Fortunately I had finished all my work during the night and so was able to cope with the crowds. My companions proved the greatest help. They occupied themselves with regulating the crowds, for the latter followed me wherever I went.

A sort of friendliness sprang up between the officials—Collector, Magistrate, Police Superintendent—and myself. I might have legally resisted the notices served on me. Instead I accepted them all and my conduct towards the officials was correct. They thus saw that I did not want to offend them personally but that I wanted to offer civil resistance to their orders. In this way they were put at ease and instead of harassing me, they gladly availed themselves of my and my co-workers' co-operation in regulating the crowds. But it was an ocular demonstration to them of the fact that their authority was shaken. The people had for the moment lost all fear of punishment and yielded obedience to the power of love which their new friend exercised.

It should be remembered that no one knew me in Champaran. The peasants were all ignorant. Champaran, being far up north of the Ganges and right at the foot of the Himalayas in close proximity to Nepal, was cut off from the rest of India. The Congress was practically unknown in those parts. Even those who had heard the name of the Congress, shrank from joining it or even mentioning it. And now the Congress and its members had entered this land, though not in the name of the Congress yet in a far more real sense.

In consultation with my co-workers I had decided that nothing should be done in the name of the Congress. What

we wanted was work and not name, substance and not shadow. For the name of the Congress was the *bete noire* of the Government and their controllers—the planters. To them the Congress was a byword for lawyers' wrangles, evasion of law through legal loopholes, a byword for bomb and anarchical crime and for diplomacy and hypocrisy. We had to disillusion them both. Therefore we had decided not to mention the name of the Congress and not to acquaint the peasants with the organization called the Congress. It was enough, we had thought, if they understood and followed the spirit of the Congress instead of its letter.

No emissaries had therefore been sent there, openly or secretly, on behalf of the Congress to prepare the ground for our arrival. Rajkumar Shukla was incapable of reaching the thousands of peasants. No political work had yet been done amongst them. The world outside Champaran was not known to them and yet they received me as though we had been age-long friends. It is no exaggeration but the literal truth to say that in this meeting with the peasants I was face to face with God, ahimsa and Truth.

When I come to examine my title to this realization I find nothing but my love for the people. And this in turn is nothing but an expression of my unshakable faith in ahimsa.

That day in Champaran was an unforgettable event in my life and a red-letter day for the peasants and for me.

According to the law I was to be on my trial, but truly speaking Government was to be on its trial. The Commissioner only succeeded in trapping Government in the net which he had spread for me.

THE FIERY ORDEAL*

I

WHEN KILLING MAY BE AHIMSA

An attempt is being made at the Ashram to run a small model dairy and tannery on behalf of the Goseva Sangh. Its work in this connection brings it up, at every step, against intricate moral dilemmas that would not arise but for the keenness to realize the Ashram ideal of seeking Truth through the exclusive means of ahimsa.

For instance some days back a calf having been maimed lay in agony in the Ashram. Whatever treatment and nursing was possible was given to it. The surgeon whose advise was sought in the matter declared the case to be past help and past hope. The suffering of the animal was so great that it could not even turn its side without excruciating pain.

In these circumstances I felt that humanity demanded that the agony should be ended by ending life itself. I held a preliminary discussion with the Managing Committee most of whom agreed with my view. The matter was then placed before the whole Ashram. At the discussion a worthy neigh-

* The killing of an ailing calf in the Ashram under circumstances described above caused a great commotion and some angry letters were addressed to Gandhiji on the subject. Gandhiji critically examined the question in the light of the principle of non-violence in this article.

bour vehemently opposed the idea of killing even to end pain and offered to nurse the dying animal. The nursing consisted in co-operation with some of the Ashram sisters in warding the flies off the animal and trying to feed it. The ground of the friend's opposition was that one has no right to take away life which we cannot create. His argument seemed to me to be pointless here. It would have point if the taking of life was actuated by self-interest. Finally in all humility but with the clearest of convictions I got in my presence a doctor kindly to administer the calf a *quietus* by means of a poison injection. The whole thing was over in less than two minutes.

I knew that public opinion would not approve of my action and that it would read nothing but *himsa* in it.

But I know too that performance of one's duty should be independent of public opinion. I have all along held that one is bound to act according to what to one appears to be right even though it may appear wrong to others. And experience has shown that that is the only correct course. I admit that there is always a possibility of one's mistaking right for wrong and *vice versa* but often one learns to recognize wrong only through unconscious error. On the other hand if a man fails to follow the light within for fear of public opinion or any other similar reason he would never be able to know right from wrong and in the end lose all sense of distinction between the two. That is why the poet has sung :

The pathway of love is the ordeal of fire,
The shrinkers turn away from it.

The pathway of *ahimsa*, that is, of love, one has often to tread all alone.

But the question may very legitimately be put to me; Would I apply to human beings the principle I have enunciated in connection with the calf? Would I like it to be applied in my own case? My reply is yes; the same law holds good in both the cases. The law of "as with one so with all" admits of no exceptions, or the killing of the calf was wrong and violent. In practice however we do not cut short the sufferings of our ailing dear ones by death because as a rule we have always means at our disposal to help them and because they have the capacity to think and decide for themselves. But supposing that in the case of an ailing friend I am unable to render any aid whatever and recovery is out of the question and the patient is lying in an unconscious state in the throes of fearful agony, then I would not see any *himsa* in putting an end to his suffering by death.

Just as a surgeon does not commit *himsa* but practises the purest *ahimsa* when he wields his knife on his patient's body for the latter's benefit, similarly one may find it necessary under certain imperative circumstances to go a step further and sever life from the body in the interest of the sufferer. It may be objected that whereas the surgeon performs his operation to save the life of the patient, in the other case we do just the reverse. But on a deeper analysis it will be found that the ultimate object sought to be served in both the cases is the same, viz., to relieve the suffering soul within from pain. In the one case you do it by severing the diseased portion from the body, in the other you do it by severing from the soul the body that has become an instrument of torture to it. In either case it is the relief of the soul within from pain that is aimed at, the body without the life within being incapable of feeling either pleasure or pain. Other circumstances can be imagined in which not to kill would

spell *himsa*, while killing would be *ahimsa*. Suppose for instance, that I find my daughter—whose wish at the moment I have no means of ascertaining—is threatened with violation and there is no way by which I can save her, then it would be the purest form of *ahimsa* on my part to put an end to her life and surrender myself to the fury of the incensed ruffian.

But the trouble with our votaries of *ahimsa* is that they have made of *ahimsa* a blind fetish and put the greatest obstacle in the way of the spread of true *ahimsa* in our midst. The current (and in my opinion, mistaken) view of *ahimsa* has drugged our conscience and rendered us insensible to a host of other and more insidious forms of *himsa* like harsh words, harsh judgments, ill-will, anger and spite and lust of cruelty; it has made us forget that there may be far more *himsa* in the slow torture of men and animals, the starvation and exploitation to which they are subjected out of selfish greed, the wanton humiliation and oppression of the weak and the killing of their self-respect that we witness all round us today than in mere benevolent taking of life. Does anyone doubt for a moment that it would have been far more humane to have summarily put to death those who in the infamous lane of Amritsar were made by their torturers to crawl on their bellies like worms? If anyone desires to retort by saying that these people themselves today feel otherwise, they are none the worse for their crawling, I shall have no hesitation in telling him that he does not know even the elements of *ahimsa*. There arise occasions in a man's life when it becomes his imperative duty to meet them by laying down his life; not to appreciate this fundamental fact of man's estate is to betray an ignorance of the foundation of *ahimsa*. For instance, a votary of truth would pray to God to give him death to save him from a life of falsehood. Similarly a votary of *ahimsa* would on bent knees implore his enemy to

put him to death rather than humiliate him or make him do things unbecoming the dignity of a human being. As the poet has sung :

The way of the Lord is meant for heroes,
Not for cowards.

It is this fundamental misconception about the nature and scope of ahimsa, this confusion about the relative values, that is responsible for our mistaking mere non-killing for ahimsa and for the fearful amount of *himsa* that goes on in the name of ahimsa in our country. Let a man contrast the sanctimonious horror that is affected by the so-called votaries of ahimsa, at the very idea of killing an ailing animal to cut short its agony with their utter apathy and indifference to countless cruelties that are practised on our dumb cattle world. And he will begin to wonder whether he is living in the land of ahimsa or in that of conscious or unconscious hypocrisy.

It is our spiritual inertia, lack of moral courage—the courage to think boldly and look facts squarely in the face—that is responsible for this deplorable state of affairs. Look at our *pinjrapoles* and goshalas, many of them represent today so many dens of torture to which as a sop to conscience we consign the hapless and helpless cattle. If they could only speak they would cry out against us and say, “Rather than subject us to this slow torture give us death.” I have often read this mute appeal in their eyes.

To conclude then, to cause pain or wish ill to or to take the life of any living being out of anger or a selfish intent is *himsa*. On the other hand after a calm and clear judgment to kill or cause pain to a living being with a view to its spiritual or physical benefit from a pure, selfless intent may

be the purest form of ahimsa. Each such case must be judged individually and on its own merits. The final test as to its violence or non-violence is after all the intent underlying the act.

II

WHEN KILLING IS HIMSA

I now come to the other crying problem that is confronting the Ashram today. The monkey nuisance has become very acute and an immediate solution has become absolutely necessary. The growing vegetables and fruit trees have become a special mark of attention of this privileged fraternity and are now threatened with utter destruction. In spite of all our efforts we have not yet been able to find an efficacious and at the same time non-violent remedy for the evil.

The matter has provoked a hot controversy in certain circles and I have received some angry letters on the subject. One of the correspondents has protested against the "killing of monkeys and wounding them by means of arrows in the Ashram". Let me hasten to assure the reader that no monkey has so far been killed in the Ashram, nor has any monkey been wounded by means of "arrows" or otherwise as imagined by the correspondent. Attempts are undoubtedly being made to drive them away and harmless arrows have been used for the purpose.

The idea of wounding monkeys to frighten them away seems to me unbearable though I am seriously considering the question of killing them in case it should become unavoidable. But this question is not so simple or easy as the previous one.

I see a clear breach of ahimsa even in driving away monkeys, the breach would be proportionately greater if they have to be killed. For any act of injury done from self-interest whether amounting to killing or not is doubtless *himsa*.

All life in the flesh exists by some *himsa*. Hence the highest religion has been defined by a negative word ahimsa. The world is bound in a chain of destruction. In other words *himsa* is an inherent necessity for life in the body. That is why a votary of ahimsa always prays for ultimate deliverance from the bondage of flesh.

None, while in the flesh, can thus be entirely free from *himsa* because one never completely renounces the will to live. Of what use is it to force the flesh merely if the spirit refuses to co-operate? You may starve even unto death but if at the same time the mind continues to hanker after objects of the sense, your fast is a sham and a delusion. What then is the poor helpless slave to the will to live to do? How is he to determine the exact nature and the extent of *himsa* he must commit? Society has no doubt set down a standard and absolved the individual from troubling himself about it to that extent. But every seeker after truth has to adjust and vary the standard according to his individual need and to make a ceaseless endeavour to reduce the circle of *himsa*. But the peasant is too much occupied with the burden of his hard and precarious existence to have time or energy to think out these problems for himself and the cultured class instead of helping him chooses to give him the cold shoulder. Having become a peasant myself, I have no clear-cut road to go by and must therefore chalk out a path for myself and possibly for fellow peasants. And the monkey nuisance being one of the multitude of ticklish problems that stare the farmer in the face, I

must find out some means by which the peasant's crop can be safeguarded against it with the minimum amount of *himsa*.

I am told that the farmers of Gujarat employ special watchmen whose very presence scares away the monkeys and saves the peasant from the necessity of killing them. That may be but it should not be forgotten that whatever efficacy this method might have, it is clearly dependent upon some measure of destruction at some time or other. For these cousins of ours are wily and intelligent beings. The moment they discover that there is no real danger for them, they refuse to be frightened even by gun shots and only gibber and howl the more when shots are fired. Let nobody therefore imagine that the Ashram has not considered or left any method of dealing with the nuisance untried. But none of the methods that I have known up to now is free from *himsa*. Whilst therefore I would welcome any practical suggestions from the readers of *Navajivan* for coping with this problem, let the intending advisers bear in mind what I have said above and send only such solutions as they have themselves successfully tried and cause the minimum amount of injury.

Young India, 4-10-1928

THE GITA AND THE RAMAYANA

Many young people, unable, to keep away from sin in spite of their best efforts, become despondent and gradually sink deeper into sin. Some even begin to look upon sin as virtue. I often advise such people to read the *Gita* and the *Ramayana* again and again. But they don't find it interesting. For their consolation I give below an extract bearing on the subject from the letter of a young man.* One would scarcely find young men were despondent and cynical than the writer of this letter was. Sins had made their abode in his body. But the faith he has today should inspire hope in all young people. No one who studies the *Ramayana* and such other works, placing his faith in the experience of those who have conquered their passions, can remain unmoved. Even on the study of ordinary subjects, we often have to spend many years and employ divers means. How much effort then would be needed to study something which concerns peace not only in this life but hereafter ! What can be said of one who in spite of this would spend minimum time and attention on the *Ramayana* and the *Gita* and still expect them to be interesting. The writer of the above letter says that passions invade him the moment he is conscious of being calm. What is true of the body is true of the mind. One whose body is perfectly healthy is never conscious of his health. That consciousness is not necessary at all. Being healthy is the nature of the body. The same is the case with

* Not reproduced here. The correspondent had described how his study of the *Ramayana* and the *Gita* had benefited him.

mind. The day we become conscious of its being clean we should understand that passions are creeping in. So the way to keep the mind ever clean is to keep it constantly engrossed in good thoughts. That is why Ramanama and the like were invented and sung. One in whose heart Rama dwells permanently can never be assailed by passions. The truth is that Ramanama ultimately sinks into the heart of one who recites it with true devotion. When this happens, it becomes an impregnable fortress. Impurity can be combated not by brooding over it, but by contemplating purity. With good intentions we often go in for contrary remedies. We contemplate impurity when we brood; where did it come from? This is to be compared with violent remedies, the true remedy being non-co-operation. When impurity invades us, there is no need to bid it quit. We must contemplate purity as if impurity did not exist. There is a trace of fear in bidding it quit. Courage lies in not even thinking of it. One should develop the faith that impurity will not even touch one. This method is proved by experience.

Navajivan, 14-4-1929

SALT TAX

A paragraph appeared in the press that I would advise non-payment of the salt tax to begin with. The manufacturer of the canard did not know perhaps, that the salt tax was so ingeniously devised that it would not yield to easy non-payment. Nevertheless there was this truth in it, that I was contemplating some method of attacking this nefarious monopoly. The garbled report has however resulted in most valuable information having been supplied to me by known and unknown writers. Among the publications thus received is the monograph issued by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce on salt. It is a valuable publication giving an authentic history of the process of killing by wicked methods salt manufacture in Bengal and dumping down Liverpool salt on a soil which could produce good salt for only a little labour. This history of the evolution of the salt tax furnishes by itself complete condemnation of the British Government.

Next to air and water, salt is perhaps the greatest necessity of life. It is the only condiment of the poor. Cattle cannot live without salt. Salt is a necessary article in many manufactures. It is also a rich manure.

There is no article like salt outside water by taxing which the State can reach even the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless. The tax constitutes therefore the most inhuman poll tax that ingenuity of man can devise. The wholesale price per maund of 82 lb. is

according to Government publications as low as 10 pies, and the tax, say, twenty annas, i.e., 240 pies. This means 2,400 per cent on sale price ! What this means to the poor can hardly be imagined by us. Salt production like cotton growing has been centralized for the sake of sustaining the inhuman monopoly. The necessary consequence of the wilful destruction of the spinning-wheel was destruction of cottage cultivation of cotton. The necessary consequence of salt monopoly was the destruction, i.e., closing down of salt works in thousands of places where the poor people manufactured their own salt. A correspondent writes to me from Konkan, saying that if the people had freedom, they could pick up salt from the deposits made by the receding tides on the bountiful coast. But he sorrowfully adds that officers turn the salt over into the sea as fast as nature deposits it. He adds however, that those who can successfully evade the salt police do help themselves to this sea salt. Gujarat workers report the existence of many places where, but for the prohibition, people can get their salt as easily as they can dig out earth for many household purposes. Bengal free can today manufacture all the salt she can ever need. And yet she is forced to import all the salt she eats.

Here is what a retired salt officer writes without disclosing his name :

Under the law the manufacture of salt includes every process by which salt is separated from brine or earth or any other liquid or solid substance and also every process for the purification or refinement of salt.

Contraband salt means salt or salt-earth which has not paid duty.

1. Manufacture, removal, or transport of salt without licence;
2. The excavation, collection, or removal of natural salt or salt-earth;
3. And possession or sale of contraband salt are punishable with a fine up to Rs. 500/- or imprisonment up to six months or both.

The whole western littoral of the Bombay Presidency from Cambay to Ratnagiri, the whole coast of Kathiawad and the southern coast of Sind is a huge natural salt work, and natural salt and salt-earth from which salt can be easily prepared is in every creek.

If a band of volunteers begin the work all along the coast, it would be impossible for the whole strength of the police and customs staff to prevent them collecting natural salt and salt-earth, turning them into salt in the interior and retailing it. The people of the presidency or at least the men and women of the older generation firmly believe that locally manufactured sea salt is healthier than Kharaghoda salt, and they would love to have it, while everyone would like to have cheap salt. The poor people on the coast will join in the collection of salt spontaneously in these days of unemployment. Trying to get salt from Government salt works without paying duty would be stealing or robbery, an act of first class *himsa* that would justify even shooting down of the offenders if they persisted in the act.

I have given the letter as it was received. When salt can be manufactured much more easily than it can be taken from

salt depots, I am not likely to advise people to help themselves to the article from salt pans or storehouses. But I do not share the salt officer's characterization of such helping as first class *himsa*. Both, the helping from pans and manufacturing contraband salt are statutory crimes heavily punishable. Why is the manufacturing without licence a virtue and taking salt from a manufacturing pan a vice? If the impost is wrong it is wrong whether in connection with manufactured salt or the crude article. If a robber steals my grain and cooks some of it I am entitled to both the raw and the cooked grain. I may draw a distinction for the sake of avoiding inconvenience between manufactured and crude salt, and adopt the easier method of manufacturing salt. But that does not alter the legal position in the slightest degree. When therefore the time comes, civil resisters will have an ample opportunity to prove their ability to conduct their campaign regarding the tax in a most effective manner. The illegality is in a Government that steals the people's salt and makes them pay heavily for the stolen article. The people, when they become conscious of their power, will have every right to take possession of what belongs to them.

Young India, 27-2-1930

DUTY OF DISLOYALTY

There is no half-way house between active loyalty and active disloyalty. There is much truth in the late Justice Stephen's remark that a man to prove himself not guilty of disaffection must prove himself to be actively affectionate. In these days of democracy there is no such thing as active loyalty to a person. You are therefore loyal or disloyal to institutions. The present State is an institution which, if one knows it, can never evoke loyalty. It is corrupt. Many of its laws governing the the conduct of persons are positively inhuman. Their administration is worse. Often the will of one person is the law. It may safely be said that there are as many rulers as there are districts in this country. These, called Collectors, combine in their own persons the executive as well as the judicial functions. Though their acts are supposed to be governed by laws in themselves highly defective, these rulers are often capricious and regulated by nothing but their own whims and fancies. They represent not the interests of the people but those of their foreign masters or principals. These (nearly three hundred) men form an almost secret corporation, the most powerful in the world. They are required to find a fixed minimum of revenue, they have therefore often been found to be most unscrupulous in their dealings with the people. This system of government is confessedly based upon a merciless exploitation of unnumbered millions of the inhabitants of India. From the village headmen to their personal assistants these satraps have created a class of subordinates who, whilst they cringe before their foreign masters, in their constant dealings with the

people act so irresponsibly and so harshly as to demoralize them and by a system of terrorism render them incapable of resisting corruption. It is then the duty of those who have realized the awful evil of the system of Indian Government to be disloyal to it and actively and openly to preach disloyalty. Indeed, loyalty to a State so corrupt is a sin, disloyalty a virtue.

The spectacle of three hundred million people being cowed down by living in the dread of three hundred men is demoralizing alike for the despots as for the victims. It is the duty of those who have realized the evil nature of the system, however attractive some of its features may, torn from their context, appear to be, to destroy it without delay. It is their clear duty to run any risk to achieve the end.

But it must be equally clear that it would be cowardly for three hundred million people to seek to destroy the three hundred authors or administrators of the system. It is a sign of gross ignorance to devise means of destroying these administrators or their hirelings. Moreover they are but creatures of circumstances. The purest man entering the system will be affected by it and will be instrumental in propagating the evil. The remedy therefore naturally is not being enraged against the administrators and therefore hurting them, but to non-co-operate with the system by withdrawing all the voluntary assistance possible and refusing all its so-called benefits. A little reflection will show that civil disobedience is a necessary part of non-co-operation. You assist an administration most effectively by obeying its orders and decrees. An evil administration never deserves such allegiance. Allegiance to it means partaking of the evil. A good man will therefore resist an evil system or administration with his whole soul. Disobedience of the laws of an evil

State is therefore a duty. Violent disobedience deals with men who can be replaced. It leaves the evil itself untouched and often accentuates it. Non-violent, i.e., civil, disobedience is the only and the most successful remedy and is obligatory upon him who would dissociate himself from evil.

There is danger in disobedience only because it is still only a partially tried remedy and has always to be tried in an atmosphere surcharged with violence. For when tyranny is rampant much rage is generated among the victims. It remains latent because of their weakness and bursts in all its fury on the slightest pretext. Civil disobedience is a sovereign method of transmuting this undisciplined life-destroying latent energy into disciplined life-saving energy whose use ensures absolute success. The attendant risk is nothing compared to the result promised. When the world has become familiar with its use and when it has a series of demonstrations of its successful working, there will be less risk in civil disobedience than there is in aviation, in spite of that science having reached a high stage of development.

Young India, 27-3-1930

TRUTH

July 22, 1930

The word *satya* (truth) is derived from *sat*, which means "being". Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why *sat* or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God, than to say that God is Truth. But as we cannot do without a ruler or a general, such names of God as "King of Kings" or "The Almighty" are and will remain generally current. On deeper thinking, however, it will be realized, that *sat* or *satya* is the only correct and fully significant name for God.

And where there is Truth, there also is knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge. That is why the word *chit* or knowledge is associated with the name God. And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss (*ananda*). There sorrow has no place. And even as Truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. Hence we know God as *sat-chit-ananda*, One who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

Devotion to this Truth is the sole justification for our existence. All our activities should be centred in Truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life. When once this stage in the pilgrim's progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it is impossible

to observe any principles or rules in life.

Generally speaking, observation of the law of Truth is understood merely to mean that we must speak the truth. But we in the Ashram should understand the word *satya* or truth in a much wider sense. There should be truth in thought, truth in speech, and truth in action. To the man who has realized this Truth in its fullness, nothing else remains to be known, because all knowledge is necessarily included in it. What is not included in it is not truth, and so not true knowledge; and there can be no inward peace without true knowledge. If we once learn how to apply this never-failing test of Truth; we will at once be able to find out what is worth doing, what is worth seeing, what is worth reading.

But how is one to realize this Truth, which may be likened to the philosopher's stone or the cow of plenty? By single-minded devotion (*abhyasa*) and indifference to all other interests in life (*vairagya*)—replies the *Bhagavadgita*. In spite, however, of such devotion, what may appear as truth to one person will often appear as untruth to another person. But that need not worry the seeker. Where there is honest effort, it will be realized that what appear to be different truths are like the countless and apparently different leaves of the same tree. Does not God Himself appear to different individuals in different aspects? Yet we know that He is one. But Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing wrong in every man following Truth according to his lights. Indeed it is his duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of any one so following Truth it will be automatically set right. For the quest of Truth involves *tapas*—self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest.

In such selfless search for Truth nobody can lose his bearings for long. Directly he takes to the wrong path he stumbles and is thus redirected to the right path. Therefore the pursuit of Truth is true *bhakti* (devotion). It is the path that leads to God. There is no place in it for cowardice, no place for defeat. It is the talisman by which death itself becomes the portal to life eternal.

In this connection it would be well to ponder over the lives and examples of Harishchandra, Prahlad, Ramachandra, Imam Hasan and Imam Husain, the Christian saints, etc. How beautiful it would be if all of us, young and old, men and women, devoted ourselves wholly to Truth in all that we might do in our waking hours, whether working, eating, drinking or playing, till dissolution of the body makes us one with Truth? God as Truth has been for me a treasure beyond price; may He be so to every one of us.

From Yeravda Mandir

FEARLESSNESS

September 2, 1930

Every reader of the *Gita* knows, that fearlessness heads the list of the Divine Attributes enumerated in the 16th chapter. Whether this is merely due to the exigencies of metre, or whether the pride of place has been deliberately yielded to fearlessness, is more than I can say. In my opinion, however, fearlessness richly deserves the first rank assigned to it. For it is indispensable for the growth of the other noble qualities. How can one seek Truth, or cherish Love, without fearlessness? As Pritam says, "the path of Hari (the Lord) is the path of the brave, not of cowards". Hari here means Truth, and the brave are those armed with fearlessness, not with the sword, the rifle and the like. These are taken up only by those who are possessed by fear.

Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear,—fear of disease, bodily injury and death, of dispossession, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on. One who overcomes the fear of death does not surmount all other fears, as is commonly but erroneously supposed. Some of us do not fear death, but flee from the minor ills of life. Some are ready to die themselves, but cannot bear their loved ones being taken away from them. Some misers will put up with all this, will part even with their lives, but not their property; others will do any number of black deeds in order to uphold their supposed prestige. Some will swerve from the strait

and narrow path, which lies clear before them, simply because they are afraid of incurring the world's odium. The seeker after Truth must conquer all these fears. He should be ready to sacrifice his all in the quest of Truth, even as Harishchandra did. The story of Harishchandra may be only a parable; but every seeker will bear witness to its truth from his personal experience, and therefore that story is as precious as any historical fact.

Perfect fearlessness can be attained only by him who has realized the Supreme, as it implies freedom from delusions. One can always progress towards this goal by determined and constant endeavour, and by cultivating self-confidence.

As I have stated at the very outset, we must give up all external fears. But the internal foes we must always fear. We are rightly afraid of animal passion, anger, and the like. External fears cease of their own accord, when once we have conquered these traitors within the camp. All such fears revolve round the body as the centre, and will therefore disappear, as soon as we get rid of attachment for the body. We thus find that all external fear is the baseless fabric of our own vision. Fear has no place in our hearts, when we have shaken off attachment for wealth, for family and for the the body. "Enjoy the things of the earth by renouncing them" is a noble precept. Wealth, family and body will be there, just the same; we have only to change our attitude towards them. All these are not ours, but God's. Nothing whatever in this world is ours. Even we ourselves are His. Why then should we entertain any fears? The Upanishad there directs us "to give up attachment for things, while we enjoy them." That is to say, we must be interested in them, not as proprietors, but only as trustees. He, on whose behalf we hold them,

will give us the strength and the weapons requisite for defending them against all usurpers. When we thus cease to be masters, and reduce ourselves to the rank of servants, humbler than the very dust under our feet, all fears will roll away like mists; we shall attain ineffable peace, and see Satyanarayan (the God of Truth) face to face.

Young India, 11-9-1930

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

September 23/30, 1930

I do not like the word tolerance, but could not think of a better one. Tolerance may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas ahimsa teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths as we accord to our own, thus admitting the imperfection of the latter. This admission will be readily made by a seeker of Truth, who follows the law of love. If we had attained the full vision of Truth, we would no longer be mere seekers, but would have become one with God, for Truth is God. But being only seekers we prosecute our quest, and are conscious of our imperfection. And if we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect. We have not realized religion in its perfection, even as we have not realized God. Religion of our conception, being thus imperfect, is always subject to a process of evolution and re-interpretation. Progress towards Truth, towards God, is possible only because of such evolution. And if all faiths outlined by men are imperfect, the question of comparative merit does not arise. All faiths constitute a revelation of Truth, but all are imperfect, and liable to error. Reverence for other faiths need not blind us to their faults. We must be keenly alive to the defects of our own faith also, yet not leave it on that account, but try to overcome those defects. Looking at all religions with an equal eye, we would not only not hesitate, but would think it our duty, to blend into our faith every acceptable feature of other faiths.

The question then arises : Why should there be so many different faiths ? The soul is one, but the bodies which she animates are many. We cannot reduce the number of bodies; yet we recognize the unity of the soul. Even as a tree has a single trunk, but many branches and leaves, so is there one true and perfect Religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium. The one Religion is beyond all speech. Imperfect men put it into such language as they can command, and their words are interpreted by other men equally imperfect. Whose interpretation is to be held to be the right one ? Everybody is right from his own standpoint, but it is not impossible that everybody is wrong. Hence the necessity for tolerance which does not mean indifference towards one's own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it. Tolerance gives us spiritual insight, which is as far from fanaticism as the north pole from the south. True knowledge of religion breaks down the barriers between faith and faith. Cultivation of tolerance for other faiths will impart to us a truer understanding of our own.

Tolerance obviously does not disturb the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil. The reference here throughout is naturally to the principal faiths of the world. They are all based on common fundamentals. They have all produced great saints.

I would linger yet a while on tolerance. My meaning will perhaps become clearer if I describe here some of my experiences. In Phoenix we had our daily prayers in the same way as in Sabarmati, and Mussulmans as well as Christians attended them along with Hindus. The late Sheth Rustomji and his children too frequented the prayer meetings. Rustomji Sheth very much liked the Gujarati *bhajan*, "*Mane valun*"—"Dear, dear to me is the name of Rama". If my

memory serves me right, Maganlal or Kashi was once leading us in singing this hymn, when Rustomji Sheth exclaimed joyously, "Say the name of Hormazd instead of name of Rama. His suggestion was readily taken up, and after that whenever the Sheth was present, and sometimes even when he was not, we put in the name of Hormazd in place of Rama. The late Husain, son of Daud Sheth, often stayed at the Phoenix Ashram, and enthusiastically joined our prayers. To the accompaniment of an organ, he used to sing in a very sweet voice the song "*Hai bahare bagh*",—"The garden of this world has only a momentary bloom." He taught us all this song, which we also sang at prayers. Its inclusion in our *Bhajanavali* is a tribute to truth-loving Husain's memory. I have never met a young man who practised Truth more devotedly than Husain. Joseph Royeppen often came to Phoenix. He is a Christian, and his favourite hymn was "*Vaishnava jana*"—"He is a *Vaishnava* (servant of the Lord), who succours people in distress." He loved music and once sang this hymn saying "Christian" in place of "Vaishnava". The others accepted his reading with alacrity, and I observed that this filled Joseph's heart with joy.

When I was turning over the pages of the sacred books of different faiths for my own satisfaction, I became sufficiently familiar for my purpose with Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Hinduism. In reading these texts, I can say, that I was equiminded towards all these faiths, although perhaps I was not then conscious of it. Refreshing my memory of those days, I do not find I ever had the slightest desire to criticize any of those religions merely because they were not my own, but read each sacred book in a spirit of reverence, and found the same fundamental morality in each. Some things I did not understand then, and do not understand even now, but experience has taught

me, that it is a mistake hastily to imagine that anything that we cannot understand is necessarily wrong. Some things which I did not understand first have since become as clear as daylight. Equimindedness helps us to solve many difficulties and even when we criticize anything, we express ourselves with a humility and courtesy, which leave no sting behind them.

The acceptance of the doctrine of Equality of Religions does not abolish the distinction between religion and irreligion. We do not propose to cultivate toleration for irreligion. That being so, some people might object that there would be no room left for equimindedness if every one took his own decision as to what was religion and what was irreligion. If we follow the law of love, we shall not bear any hatred towards the irreligious brother. On the contrary, we shall love him, and therefore either we shall bring him to see the error of his ways, or he will point our error, or each will tolerate the other's difference of opinion. If the other party does not observe the law of Love, he may be violent to us. If however we cherish real love for him, it will overcome his bitterness in the end. All obstacles in our path will vanish, if only we observe the golden rule, that we must not be impatient with those whom we may consider to be in error, but must be prepared if need be, to suffer in our own person.

Young India, 2-10-1930 and 9-10-1930

IMPORTANCE OF VOWS

October 19, 1930

There is a powerful school of thinkers, who concede the propriety of observing certain rules, but do not acknowledge the necessity of vows. They go even so far as to suggest that vows are a sign of weakness, and may even be harmful. Again they argue that if a rule is subsequently discovered to be inconvenient or sinful, to adhere to it after such discovery would be positively wrong. They say : It is a good thing to abstain from liquor, but what harm is there in taking it occasionally, say on medical grounds ? A pledge of total abstinence would be a needless handicap; and as with liquor, so with other things.

A vow means unflinching determination, and helps us against temptations. Determination is worth nothing if it bends before discomfort. The universal experience of humanity supports the view that progress is impossible without inflexible determination. There cannot be a vow to commit a sin; in the case of a vow first thought to be meritorious but later found to be sinful, there arises a clear necessity to give it up. But no one takes, or ought to take, vows about dubious matters. Vows can be taken only on points of universally recognized principles. The possibility of sin in such a case is more or less imaginary. A devotee of Truth cannot stop to consider if someone will not be injured by his telling the truth, for he believes that truth can never do harm. So also about total abstinence. The abstainer

will either make an exception as regards medicine, or will be prepared to risk his life in fulfilment of his full vow. What does it matter, if we happen to lose our lives through a pledge of total abstinence ? There can be no guarantee that our lives will be prolonged by liquor, and even if it is prolonged for a moment it may be ended the very next through some other agency. On the other hand, the example of a man, who gives up his life rather than his pledge, is likely to wean drunkards from liquor, and thus become a great power for good in the world. Only they can hope some time to see God, who have nobly determined to bear witness to the faith that is in them, even at the cost of life itself.

Taking vows is not a sign of weakness, but of strength. To do at any cost something that one ought to do constitutes a vow. It becomes a bulwark of strength. A man who says that he will do something "as far as possible" betrays either his pride or his weakness. I have noticed in my own case as well as in the case of others, that the limitation "as far as possible" provides a fatal loophole. To do something "as far as possible" is to succumb to the very first temptation. There is no sense in saying, that we will observe truth "as far as possible". Even as no businessman will look at a note in which a man promises to pay a certain amount on a certain date "as far as possible", so will God refuse to accept a promissory note drawn by a man who will observe truth as far as possible.

God is the very image of the vow. God would cease to be God if He swerved from His own laws even by a hair's breadth. The sun is a great keeper of observances; hence the possibility of measuring time and publishing almanacs. All business depends upon men fulfilling their promises. Are

such promises less necessary in character-building or self-realization ? We should therefore never doubt the necessity of vows for the purpose of self-purification and self-realization.

From Yeravda Mandir

AN IDEAL MAN

November 17, 1930

One who renounces all the cravings which torment the heart and derives his contentment from within himself is said to be a *sthitaprajna* and *samadhista* (one stable in spirit). He is unruffled in adversity, and he does not hanker after happiness. Pleasure and pain are felt through the five senses. Therefore this wise man draws his senses away from sense objects even as a tortoise draws in his limbs. The tortoise withdraws into his shell when he apprehends danger. But in the case of human beings sense objects are ready to attack the senses at all times; therefore their senses must always be drawn in, and they should be ever ready to fight against sense objects. This is the real battle. Some people resort to self-mortification and fasting as weapons of defence against sense objects. These measures have their limited use. The senses do not make for sense objects so long as a man is fasting, but fasting alone does not destroy his relish for them. On the other hand that relish may be heightened when the fast is broken, and a man can get rid of it only with the grace of God. The senses are so powerful that they drag a man behind them by force if he is not on his guard. Therefore a man must always keep them under control. This end he can achieve only if he turns his eyes inward, realizes God Who resides in his heart and is devoted to Him. One who thus looks upon Me as His goal and surrenders his all to Me, keeping his senses in control, is a yogi stable in spirit. On the other hand if a man is not master of his senses, he

is always musing on the objects of sense and conceives an attachment for them, so that he can hardly think of anything else. From this attachment arises desire; and when the desire is thwarted he gets angry. Anger drives him nearly mad. He cannot understand what he is about. He thus loses his memory, behaves in a disorderly manner and comes to an ignoble end. When a man's senses rove at will, he is like a rudderless ship which is at the mercy of the gale and is broken to pieces on the rocks. Men should therefore abandon all desires and restrain their senses, so that these do not indulge in undesirable activity. The eyes then will look straight and that too only at holy objects; the ears will listen to hymns in praise of God or to cries of distress; hands and feet will be engaged in service. Indeed all the organs of sense and of action will be employed in helping a man to do his duty and making him a fit recipient of the grace of God. And once the grace of God has descended upon him, all his sorrows are at an end. As snow melts in the sunshine, all pain vanishes when the grace of God shines upon him and he is said to be stable in spirit. But if a man is not stable-minded, how can he think of good thoughts? Without good thoughts there is no peace, and without peace there is no happiness. Where a stable-minded man sees things clear as daylight, the unstable man, distracted by the turmoil of the world, is as good as blind. On the other hand what is pure in the eyes of the worldly wise looks unclean to and repels the stable-minded man. Rivers continuously flow into the sea, but the sea remains unmoved; in the same way all sense objects come to the yogi; but he always remains calm like the sea. Thus one who abandons all desires, is free from pride and selfishness and behaves as one apart, finds peace. This is the condition of a perfect man of God, and he who is established therein even at the final hour is saved.

MESSAGE OF GITA

Even in 1888-89, when I first became acquainted with the *Gita*, I felt that it was not a historical work, but that under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind, and that physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring. This preliminary situation became more confirmed on a closer study of religion and the *Gita*. A study of the *Mahabharata* gave it added confirmation. I do not regard the *Mahabharata* as a historical work in the accepted sense. The *adiparva* contains powerful evidence in support of my opinion. By ascribing to the chief actors superhuman or subhuman origins, the great Vyasa made short work of the history of kings and their peoples. The persons therein described may be historical but the author of the *Mahabharata* has used them merely to drive home his religious theme.

The author of the *Mahabharata* has not established the necessity of physical warfare; on the contrary he has proved its futility. He has made the victors shed tears of sorrow and repentance, and has left them nothing but a legacy of miseries.

In this great work the *Gita* is the crown. Its second chapter, instead of teaching the rules of physical warfare, tells us how a perfected man is to be known. In the characteristics of the perfected man of the *Gita*, I do not see any to correspond to physical warfare. Its whole design

is inconsistent with the rules of conduct governing the relations between warring parties.

Krishna of the *Gita* is perfection and right knowledge personified; but the picture is imaginary. That does not mean that Krishna, the adored of his people, never lived. But perfection is imagined. The idea of a perfect incarnation is an aftergrowth.

In Hinduism, incarnation is ascribed to one who has performed some extraordinary service for mankind. All embodied life is in reality an incarnation of God, but it is not usual to consider every living being an incarnation. Future generations pay this homage to one who, in his own generation has been extraordinarily religious in his conduct. I can see nothing wrong in this procedure; it takes nothing from God's greatness, and there is no violence done to truth. There is an Urdu saying which means, "Adam is not God but he is a spark of the Divine." And therefore he who is the most religiously behaved has most of the divine spark in him. It is in accordance with this train of thought, that Krishna enjoys, in Hinduism, the status of the most perfect incarnation.

This belief in incarnation is a testimony of man's lofty spiritual ambition. Man is not at peace with himself till he has become like unto God. The endeavour to reach this state is the supreme, the only ambition worth having. And this is self-realization. This self-realization is the subject of the *Gita*, as it is of all scriptures. But its author surely did not write it to establish that doctrine. The object of the *Gita*, appears to me to be that of showing the most excellent way to attain self-realization. That, which is to be found, more or less clearly, spread out here and there in Hindu

religious books, has been brought out in the clearest possible language in the *Gita* even at the risk of repetition.

That matchless remedy is renunciation of fruits of action.

This is the centre round which the *Gita* is woven. This renunciation is the central sun, round which devotion, knowledge and the rest revolve like planets. The body has been likened to a prison. There must be action where there is body. Not one embodied being is exempted from labour. And yet all religions proclaim that it is possible for man, by treating the body as the temple of God, to attain freedom. Every action is tainted, be it ever so trivial. How can the body be made the temple of God? In other words, how can one be free from action, i.e., from the taint of sin? The *Gita* has answered the question in decisive language: "By desireless action; by renouncing fruits of action; by dedicating all activities to God., i.e., by surrendering oneself to Him body and soul."

But desirelessness or renunciation does not come for the mere talking about it. It is not attained by an intellectual feat. It is attainable only by a constant heart-churn. Right knowledge is necessary for attaining renunciation. Learned men possess a knowledge of a kind. They may recite the Vedas from memory, yet they may be steeped in self-indulgence. In order that knowledge may not run riot the author of the *Gita* has insisted on devotion accompanying it and has given it the first place. Knowledge without devotion will be like a misfire. Therefore, says the *Gita*, "Have devotion, and knowledge will follow." This devotion is not mere lip worship, it is a wrestling with death. Hence the *Gita's* assessment of the devotee's qualities is similar to that of

the sage's.

Thus the devotion required by the *Gita* is no soft-hearted effusiveness. It certainly is not blind faith. The devotion of the *Gita* has the least to do with externals. A devotee may use, if he likes, rosaries, forehead marks, make offerings, but these things are no test of his devotion. He is the devotee who is jealous of none, who is a fount of mercy, who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is always contented, whose resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread, who is not afraid of others, who is free from exultation, sorrow and fear, who is pure, who is versed in action and yet remains unaffected by it, who renounces all fruit, good or bad, who treats friend and foe alike, who is untouched by respect or disrespect, who is not puffed up by praise, who does not go under when people speak ill of him, who loves silence and solitude, who has a disciplined reason. Such devotion is inconsistent with the existence at the same time of strong attachments.

We thus see, that to be a real devotee is to realize oneself. Self-realization is not something apart. One rupee can purchase for us poison or nectar, but knowledge or devotion cannot buy us either salvation or bondage. These are not media of exchange. They are themselves the things we want. In other words if the means and the end are not identical, they are almost so. The extreme of means is salvation. Salvation of the *Gita* is perfect peace.

But such knowledge and devotion, to be true, have to stand the test of renunciation of fruits of action. Mere knowledge of right and wrong will not make one fit for

salvation. According to common notions a mere learned man will pass as a Pandit. He need not perform any service. He will regard it as bondage even to lift a little *lota*. Where one test of knowledge is non-liability for service, there is no room for such mundane work as the lifting of a *lota*.

Or take *bhakti*. The popular notion of *bhakti* is soft-heartedness, telling beads and the like and disdaining to do even a loving service, lest the telling of beads, etc., might be interrupted. This *bhakta* therefore leaves the rosary only for eating, drinking and the like, never for grinding corn or nursing patients.

But the *Gita* says : "No one has attained his goal without action. Even men like Janaka attained salvation through action. If even I were lazily to cease working, the world would perish. How much more necessary then for the people at large to engage in action ?"

While on the one hand it is beyond dispute that all action binds, on the other hand it is equally true that all living beings have to do some work whether they will or no. Here all activity, whether mental or physical, is to be included in the term action. Then how is one to be free from the bondage of action, even though he may be acting ? The manner in which the *Gita* has solved the problem is to my knowledge unique. The *Gita* says : "Do your allotted work but renounce its fruit—be detached and work—have no desire for reward and work."

This is the unmistakable teaching of the *Gita*. He who gives up action falls. He who gives up only the reward rises. But renunciation of fruit in no way means indifference to the result. In regard to every action one must know the

result that is expected to follow, the means thereto, and the capacity for it. He who, being thus equipped, is without desire for the result, and is yet wholly engrossed in the due fulfilment of the task before him, is said to have renounced the fruits of his action.

Again, let no one consider renunciation to mean want of fruit for the renouncer. The *Gita* reading does not warrant such a meaning. Renunciation means absence of hankering after fruit. As a matter of fact, he who renounces reaps a thousandfold. The renunciation of the *Gita* is the acid test of faith. He who is ever brooding over results often loses nerve in the performance of his duty. He becomes impatient and then gives vent to anger and begins to do unworthy things; he jumps from action to action, never remaining faithful to any. He who broods over results is like a man given to objects of senses; he is ever distracted, he says good-bye to all scruples, everything is right in his estimation and he therefore resorts to means fair and foul to attain his end.

From the bitter experiences of desire for fruit the author of the *Gita* discovered the path of renunciation of fruit, and put it before the world in a most convincing manner. The common belief is that religion is always opposed to material good. "One cannot act religiously in mercantile and such other matters. There is no place for religion in such pursuits; religion is only for attainment of salvation," we hear many worldly wise people say. In my opinion the author of the *Gita* has dispelled this delusion. He has drawn no line of demarcation between salvation and worldly pursuits. On the contrary he has shown that religion must rule even our worldly pursuits. I have felt that the *Gita* teaches us that what cannot be followed out in day to day practice cannot be called religion. Thus, according to the *Gita*, all acts that

are incapable of being performed without attachment are taboo. This golden rule saves mankind from many a pitfall. According to this interpretation murder, lying, dissoluteness and the like must be regarded as sinful and therefore taboo. Man's life then becomes simple, and from that simpleness springs peace.

Thinking along these lines, I have felt that in trying to enforce in one's life the central teaching of the *Gita*, one is bound to follow truth and ahimsa. When there is no desire for fruit, there is no temptation for untruth or *himsa*. Take any instance of untruth or violence, and it will be found that at its back was the desire to attain the cherished end. But it may be freely admitted that the *Gita* was not written to establish ahimsa. It was an accepted and primary duty even before the *Gita* age. The *Gita* had to deliver the message of renunciation of fruit. This is clearly brought out as early as the second chapter.

But if the *Gita* believed in ahimsa or it was included in desirelessness, why did the author take a warlike illustration? When the *Gita* was written, although people believed in ahimsa, wars were not only not taboo, but nobody observed the contradiction between them and ahimsa.

In assessing the implications of renunciation of fruit, we are not required to probe the mind of the author of the *Gita* as to his limitations of ahimsa and the like. Because a poet puts a particular truth before the world, it does not necessarily follow that he has known or worked out all its great consequences, or that having done so, he is able always to express them fully. In this perhaps lies the greatness of the poem and the poet. A poet's meaning is limitless. Like man, the meaning of great writings suffers evolution. On examining

the history of languages, we notice that the meaning of important words has changed or expanded. This is true of the *Gita*. The author has himself extended the meanings of some of the current words. We are able to discover this even on a superficial examination. It is possible, that in the age prior to that of the *Gita*, offering of animals in sacrifice was permissible. But there is not a trace of it in the sacrifice in the *Gita* sense. In the *Gita* continuous concentration on God is the king of sacrifices. The third chapter seems to show that sacrifice chiefly means body labour for service. The third and the fourth chapters read together will give us other meanings for sacrifice but never animal sacrifice. Similarly has the meaning of the word *sannyasa* undergone in the *Gita* a transformation. The *sannyasa* of the *Gita* will not tolerate complete cessation of all activity. The *sannyasa* of the *Gita* is all work and yet no work. Thus the author of the *Gita* by extending meanings of words has taught us to imitate him. Let it be granted, that according to the letter of the *Gita* it is possible to say that warfare is consistent with renunciation of fruit. But after 40 years' unremitting endeavour fully to enforce the teaching of the *Gita* in my own life, I have, in all humility, felt that perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observance of ahimsa in every shape and form.

The *Gita* is not an aphoristic work; it is a great religious poem. The deeper you dive into it, the richer the meanings you get. It being meant for the people at large, there is pleasing repetition. With every age the important words will carry new and expanding meanings. But its central teaching will never vary. The seeker is at liberty to extract from this treasure any meaning he likes so as to enable him to enforce in his life the central teaching.

Nor is the *Gita* a collection of do's and don'ts. What

is lawful for one may be unlawful for another. What may be permissible at one time, or in one place, may not be so at another time, and in another place. Desire for fruit is the only universal prohibition. Desirelessness is obligatory.

The *Gita* has sung the praises of knowledge, but it is beyond the mere intellect; it is essentially addressed to the heart and capable of being understood by the heart. Therefore the *Gita* is not for those who have no faith. The author makes Krishna say :

“Do not entrust this treasure to him who is without sacrifice, without devotion, without the desire for this teaching and who denies Me. On the other hand those who will give this precious treasure to My devotees will by the fact of this service assuredly reach Me. And those who, being free from malice, will with faith absorb this teaching, shall, having attained freedom, live where people of true merit go after death.”

Young India, 6-8-1931; also *The Gita According to Gandhi*

WHAT I WANT*

The Editor has kindly asked me to say in these columns "What I want". The title is a misnomer. I am here merely as an agent for the Indian National Congress, and I can want nothing apart from the Congress. "What I want", therefore, means what the Indian National Congress wants.

Let me then introduce my principal, the Indian National Congress, to the reader. It is perhaps the oldest political organization in India and claims to represent the whole of India. I know that some people would deny this claim. I can only say that it is made by right of service.

The Indian National Congress is over forty-seven years old. It was conceived by an Englishman, Allan Octavius Hume. It has had, besides Hindus, Mohammedan, Parsi and Christian presidents. It had two women as presidents—Dr. Annie Besant and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. It has zamindars, too, as its members.

The Indian National Congress is no respecter of persons. It knows no distinction between classes or creeds or the sexes. It has always championed the cause of the so-called untouchables, and has of recent years appointed an anti-untouchable

* Written in London, where Gandhiji had gone to attend the Round Table Conference as the sole representative of the Congress.

bility committee for hastening the destruction of untouchability.

But the unchallenged and unchallengeable claim of the Indian National Congress consists in its representing the millions of dumb paupers living in the seven hundred thousand Indian villages who constitute over 85 per cent of the population.

It is in the name of this great organization that I claim :

(1) Complete independence for India.

(2) This does not exclude partnership at will and on terms of absolute equality.

(3) Nor does this exclude federation or such safeguards as may be demonstrably necessary in the interest of India.

I hope the readers of *The Daily Mail* will not be frightened by the claim boldly put forth on behalf of the Congress. "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." On the strength of the wise saying nineteen hundred years old, I hope that Englishmen and Englishwomen will not grudge India the freedom which she has remained without by reason of British rule.

No reason should be necessary for a self-evident truth. Independence is every nation's birthright.

It is India's also. But it may be out of place to mention here that the people of India under British rule have

become progressively poor and emasculate. The village industry has been killed and a whole nation has been disarmed. Nothing less than complete freedom in every sense of the term can make India happy and strong.

The Daily Mail, 19-9-1931

DEPRESSED CLASSES ARE A SACRED TRUST*

September 16, 1932

The fast which I am approaching was resolved upon in the name of God for His work and, as I believe in all humility, at his call. Friends have urged me to postpone the date for the sake of giving the public a chance to organize itself. I am sorry it is not open to me to change even the hour, except for the reason stated in my letter to the Prime Minister.

The impending fast is against those who have faith in me, whether Indians or foreigners, and for those who have it not. Therefore, it is not against the English official world, but it is against those Englishmen and women who, in spite of the contrary teaching of the official world, believe in me and the justice of the cause I represent. Nor is it against those of my countrymen who have no faith in me. Whether they be Hindus or others, but it is against those countless Indians (no matter to what persuasion they belong) who believe that I represent a just cause. Above all, it is intended

* Gandhiji sent this statement to the Government of Bombay for being released to the Press. He commenced his fast unto death against separate electorate for the depressed classes at noon on September 20, 1932. However the British Government withdrew their scheme of communal electorate and the fast was broken on September 26 at 5 p.m.

to sting the Hindu conscience into right religious action.

The contemplated fast is no appeal to mere emotion. By the fast I want to throw the whole of my weight (such as it is) in the scales of justice pure and simple. Therefore, there need be no undue haste or feverish anxiety to save my life. I implicitly believe in the truth of the saying that not a blade of grass moves but by His will. He will save it if He needs it for further service in this body. None can save it against His will. Humanly speaking, I believe it will stand the strain for some time.

The separate electorate is merely the last straw. No patched up agreement between caste Hindu leaders and rival "depressed" class leaders will answer the purpose. The agreement to be valid has got to be real. If the Hindu mass mind is not yet prepared to banish untouchability root and branch, it must sacrifice me without the slightest hesitation.

There should be no coercion of those who are opposed to joint electorates. I have no difficulty in understanding their bitter opposition. They have every right to distrust me. Do I not belong to that Hindu section, miscalled a superior class, or caste Hindus, who have ground down to powder the so-called untouchables? The marvel is that the latter have remained nevertheless in the Hindu fold.

But whilst I can justify this opposition, I believe that they are in error. They will, if they can, separate the "depressed" class entirely from the Hindu society and form them into a separate class, a standing and living reproach to Hinduism. I should not mind if thereby their interest could be really served.

But my intimate acquaintance with every shade of untouchability convinces me that their lives, such as they are, are so intimately mixed with those of the caste Hindus in whose midst and for whom they live, that it is impossible to separate them. They are part of an indivisible family.

Their revolt against the Hindus with whom they live, and, their apostacy from Hinduism I should understand. But this so far as I can see they will not do. There is a subtle something—quite indefinable in Hinduism which keeps them in it even in spite of themselves.

And this fact makes it imperative for a man like me, with a living experience of it, to resist the contemplated separation even though the effort should cost life itself.

The implications of this resistance are tremendous. No compromise which does not ensure the fullest freedom for the depressed classes inside the Hindu fold can be an adequate substitute for the contemplated separation. Any betrayal of the trust can merely postpone the day of immolation for me and, henceforth, for those who think with me. The problem before responsible Hindus is to consider whether, in the event of social, civic, or political persecution of the “depressed” classes, they are prepared to face satyagraha in the shape of perpetual fast, not of one reformer like me, but an increasing army of reformers whom I believe to exist today in India and who will count their lives of no cost to achieve the liberation of these classes, and therethrough rid Hinduism, of an age-long superstition.

Let fellow-reformers who have worked with me also appreciate the implications of the fast.

It is either a hallucination of mine or an illumination. If it is the former, I must be allowed to do my penance in peace. It will be the lifting of a dead weight on Hinduism. If it is an illumination, may my agony purify Hinduism and even melt the hearts of those who are at present disposed to distrust me.

Since there appears to be a misunderstanding as to the application of my fast, I may repeat that it is aimed at a statutory separate electorate, in any shape or form, for the "depressed" classes. Immediately that threat is removed once for all, my fast will end. I hold strong views about reservation of seats, as also about the most proper method of dealing with the whole question. But I consider myself unfit as a prisoner to set forth my proposals. I should however abide by an agreement on the basis of joint electorate that may be arrived at between the responsible leaders of caste Hindus and the "depressed" classes and which has been accepted by mass meetings of all Hindus.

One thing I must make clear. The satisfactory ending of the "depressed" classes question, if it is to come, should in no way mean that I would be committed to the acceptance of His Majesty's Government's decision on the other parts of the communal question. I am personally opposed to other parts of it which to my mind make the working of any free and democratic constitution well-nigh impossible, nor would a satisfactory solution of this question in any way bind me to accept the constitution that may be framed. These are political questions for the National Congress to consider and determine. They are utterly outside my province in my individual capacity. Nor may I as a prisoner air my individual views on these questions. My fast has a narrow application. The "depressed" classes question being predomi-

nantly a religious matter, I regard it as specially my own by reason of my life-long concentration on it. It is a sacred personal trust which I may not shirk.

The fasting for light and penance is a hoary institution. I have observed it in Christianity and Islam. Hinduism is replete with instances of fasting for purification and penance. But it is a privilege, if it is also a duty. Moreover, to the best of my light, I have reduced it to a science. As an expert, therefore, I would warn friends and sympathizers against copying me blindly or out of false or hysterical sympathy. Let all such qualify themselves by hard work and selfless service of the "untouchables" and they would have independent light if their time for fasting has come.

Lastly, in so far as I know myself, this fast is being undertaken with the purest of motives and without malice or anger towards any single soul. For me it is an expression of and the last seal on non-violence. Those, therefore, who would use violence in this controversy against those whom they may consider to be inimical to me or the cause I represent will simply hasten my end. Perfect courtesy and consideration towards opponents is an absolute essential of success in this cause at least, if not in all cases.

UNTOUCHABILITY AND TEMPLE-ENTRY

Untouchability as at present practised is the greatest blot on Hinduism. It is (with apologies to Sanatanists) against the Shastras. It is against the fundamental principles of humanity, it is against the dictates of reason that a man should, by mere reason of birth, be for ever regarded as an untouchable, even unapproachable and unseeable. These adjectives do not convey the full meaning of the thing itself. It is a crime for certain men, women and their children to touch, or to approach within stated distances, or to be seen by those who are called caste-Hindus. The tragedy is that millions of Hindus believe in this institution as if it was enjoined by the Hindu religion.

Happily, Hindu reformers have recoiled with horror from this practice. They have come to the conclusion that it has no support in the Hindu Shastras taken as a whole. Isolated texts torn from their context and considered by themselves can no doubt be produced in support of this practice, as of any evil known to mankind. But there is abundant authority in the Shastras to warrant the summary rejection, as being un-Hindu, of anything or any practice that is manifestly against the fundamental principles of humanity or morality, of ahimsa or *satya*.

This movement against untouchability has been daily gathering strength. It was in last September that leading Hindus, claiming to represent the whole of Hindu India, met together and unanimously passed a resolution, condemning

untouchability and pledging themselves to abolish it by law, if possible even during the existing regime, and, failing that, when India had a Parliament of her own.

Among the marks of untouchability to be removed was the prohibition against temple-entry by Harijans. In the course of the struggle, it was discovered that the British Courts in India had recognized this evil custom, so much so that certain acts done by untouchables as such came to be offences under the British Indian Penal Code. Thus, the entry by an untouchable into a Hindu temple would be punishable as a crime under the I.P.C.

Before, therefore, the movement of temple-entry can make headway, it has become imperative to have this anomaly removed. It is for this purpose that Sjt. Ranga Iyer has given notice of two bills to be introduced in the Central Legislature. After ascertaining the opinion of the Provincial Governments, H.E. the Viceroy has sanctioned the introduction of these Bills. But, being private Bills, they have a poor chance of becoming the law of the land, unless the Government and the members of the Assembly refrain from obstructing its consideration. It may be argued that, being pledged to neutrality in matters of religion, the Government are bound to facilitate the passage of the first Bill at any rate, inasmuch as it merely seeks to undo the effect produced by the decisions of British Indian Courts, and this it does by withdrawing legal recognition from untouchability.

There are practices in various religions professed by the inhabitants of this land whose breach is not regarded as criminal, though it would be regarded as very serious by the respective religious codes. Thus, beef-eating by a Hindu is an offence in the eye of the Hindu religious code, but rightly

not punishable as a crime under the Indian Penal Code. Is there, then, any reason why the common law of India should punish a breach of the custom of untouchability? If there are many Hindus learned in the Hindu scriptures who find support in them for the present practice of untouchability, there are quite a number of equally learned Hindus holding the opposite view. Though this opinion of the Pundits has already appeared in the press, it is reproduced elsewhere for ready reference. Let it be noted that the signatories are all orthodox Hindus, as much lovers of their faith as are the learned men of the opposite school. On the 25th of January 1933 was held the session of the All-India Sanatan Dharma Sabha, presided over by Pandit Malaviyaji and attended by over one hundred learned men. It passed a resolution to the effect that Harijans were as much entitled to temple-entry as the rest of Hindus.

If the bills are not passed, it is obvious that the central part of the reform will be hung up almost indefinitely. Neutrality in matters of religion ought not to mean religious stagnation and hindrance to reform.

With due regard to the Sanatanists, it is difficult to understand the cry of "religion in danger". Under neither bill will a single temple be opened against the will of the majority of temple goers in question. The second bill expressly says so. The first bill takes up a neutral attitude. It does not help a Harijan to force his way into a temple. The reformers do not seek to compel the opponents to their will. They desire, by the fairest means possible, to convert the majority or minority, as the case may be, to their view of untouchability.

It is said that the Harijans themselves do not want

temple-entry and that they want only betterment of their economic and political condition. The reformer, too, wants the latter, but he believes that this betterment will be much quicker brought about, if religious equality is attained. The reformer denies that the Harijans do not want temple-entry. But it may be that they are so disgusted with caste Hindus and Hindu religion itself as to want nothing from them. They may in sullen discontent choose to remain outside the religious pale. Any penance on the part of caste Hindus may be too late.

Nevertheless, the caste Hindus who recognize that untouchability is a blot on Hinduism have to atone for the sin of untouchability. Whether, therefore, Harijans desire temple-entry or not, caste Hindus have to open their temples to Harijans, precisely on the same terms as the other Hindus. For a caste Hindu with any sense of honour, temple prohibition is a continuous breach of the pledge taken at the Bombay meeting of September last. Those, who gave their word to the world and to God that they would have the temples opened for the Harijans, have to sacrifice their all, if need be, for redeeming the pledge. It may be that they did not represent the Hindu mind. They have, then, to own defeat and to do the proper penance. Temple-entry is the one spiritual act that would constitute the message of freedom to the untouchables and assure them that they are not outcasts before God.

WAS IT COERCIVE ?

In the current number of the *Modern Review*, amongst the notes which are always worth reading, there are some paragraphs on my most recent fast.* The writer of these notes quotes the following from my letter to the authorities dated 14th August last:

“That (viz. fasting) is the only way in which I can fulfil my vow and also relieve myself somewhat of the strain mentioned above (“The strain of deprivation of this work is becoming unbearable”). I do not want the suspension of nourishment in any way to act as pressure on the Government. Life ceases to interest me if I may not do Harijan service without let or hindrance. . . . I do indeed want permission (to do Harijan work), but only if the Government believe that justice demands it and not because I propose to deprive myself of food if it is not granted. That deprivation is intended purely for my consolation.”

And then remarks :

As these words are the words of a truth-seeker and truth-speaker of Mahatma Gandhi's eminence, one should believe that he did not intend to put pressure on the Government by his fast. Nevertheless one cannot help being curious as to whether it never crossed Mahatmaji's

Gandhiji had gone on fast for 21 days on May 8, 1933 to end prohibition against temple-entry by Harijans.

mind that the fast would actually put pressure, if only indirect pressure, on the Government

When Mahatmaji fasted before the Poona Pact relating to depressed class seats in the Legislatures, etc., that fast did put pressure on Indians, as Rabindranath Tagore has openly confessed, though such pressure might not have been intended by the Mahatma.

The pressure felt by Indians is direct. There are, we believe, some Englishmen and other foreigners on whom Mahatmaji's fast puts direct pressure. But it may be said without injustice to British politicians and bureaucrats that the pressure which they feel, if and when they do so, is of the indirect sort . . . But we . . . are constrained to observe that, though fasts undertaken solely for one's own purification and consolation are the exclusive concern of the individual fasting, fasts undertaken directly or indirectly to bring about political or social changes have coercive effect, even though coercion, may not be intended. Like other coercion, this sort of unintended coercion is also undesirable and produces some harmful consequences. Under such coercion, some people may pretend to be convinced when they are not really convinced, and they may be hurried into agreeing to or doing things which they would not have agreed to or done if there had not been any pressure on their minds. Therefore, such coercion does not lead to universally sincere conduct and lasting reform.

I propose to deal with this criticism because it affects a matter that is by no means closed. Fasting has been for years past an integral part of my life and I may have to resume it whether outside or inside prison walls. I cannot therefore,

write too often on the science of fasting, if I may use the sacred word "science" in connection with my fasts. It is necessary to write on this matter as well for those who would thoughtlessly imitate me, as for those who criticize me sometimes without being in possession of full data.

With much of what the writer says I can readily agree. I do admit that my fast of September did unfortunately coerce some people into action which they would not have endorsed without my fast. I do admit also that my last fast coerced the Government into releasing me. I admit too, that such coercion can and does sometimes lead to insincere conduct. This is about the extent of my agreement.

These admissions do not cut at the very root of fasts. They only show that there is great need for caution and that special qualifications are necessary for those who would resort to fasting as a method of reform or securing justice.

In any examination of moral conduct, the intention is the chief ingredient. Being concerned with the morality of my action, I asserted that the intention behind the fast was not to exert coercion or pressure upon the Government. I wanted the Government to take me at my word and let me die in peace, if they could not see the justice of granting me the facilities I desired. The production of my letter would have absolved them from the charge of heartlessness, if I had died in prison. I did, indeed, know that my fast was likely, in spite of the declaration of my intention to the contrary, to influence the Government to some extent. But one may not be deflected from the right course for fear of possible but unintended consequences. If one were to be so deterred it could be shown that hardly any great action could be undertaken.

To make my meaning clearer, let me take the September

fast. It is a better illustration for examination seeing that it was unconnected with the Government. It was intended to influence both the caste and the Harijan Hindus. But there the intention was most decidedly not to induce irrespective of merits, the decision I desired, but it was to stir the Hindus to action on my submission. The intention was completely fulfilled and to that extent the fast was not therefore, from the practical standpoint, open to objection. That it went beyond the intention and coerced some people into giving a decision against their conviction was unfortunate. But such conduct is of daily occurrence in the ordinary affairs of life. People do not always act independently of others or of surrounding circumstances. But I am able to say that the vast majority of people concerned with the Pact would not accept it without a full and free discussion, and that what they accepted was accepted because they considered it to be on the whole just and fair. They did not sacrifice principle for saving my life.

And now whilst I am on the Pact I may observe parenthetically that if any injustice was done, it is not yet beyond repair. If injustice can be proved to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, it is not too late to redress it. And I need hardly give the assurance that I should regard it my sacred duty to exert myself to the best of my ability in helping to secure redress of any real injustice.

To revert to the issue under examination, I may say that I began my experiments in fasting on any large scale as an instrument of reform in 1913. I had fasted often enough before, but not in the manner of 1913. My definite opinion is that the general result of my numerous fasts was without doubt beneficial. They invariably quickened the conscience of the people interested in and sought to be influenced by

those fasts. I am not aware of any injustice having been perpetrated through these fasts. If Bengal proves injustice, it will be an exception. In no case was there any idea of exercising coercion on anyone. Indeed, I think that the word coercion would be a misnomer for the influence that was exerted by that fast under criticism. Coercion means some harmful force used against a person who is expected to do something desired by the user of the force. In the fasts in question, the force used was against myself. Surely, force or self-suffering cannot be put in the same category as the force of suffering caused to the party sought to be influenced. If I fast, in order to awaken the conscience of an erring friend whose error is beyond question, I am not coercing him in the ordinary sense of the word.

The writer of the notes says that there can be fasts that have no "coercive effect", but if the expression "coercive effect" can be lawfully used for my fasts, then in that sense, all fasts can be proved to have that effect to a greater or less extent. The fact is that all spiritual fasts always influence those who come within the zone of their influence. That is why spiritual fasting is described as *tapas*. And all *tapas* invariably exerts purifying influence on those in whose behalf it is undertaken.

Of course, it is not to be denied that fasts can be really coercive. Such are fasts to attain a selfish object. A fast undertaken to wring money from a person or for fulfilling some such personal end would amount to the exercise of coercion or undue influence. I would unhesitatingly advocate resistance of such undue influence. I have myself successfully resisted it in the fasts that have been undertaken or threatened against me. And if it is argued that the dividing line between a selfish and an unselfish end is often very thin, I would urge

that a person who regards the end of a fast to be selfish or otherwise base should resolutely refuse to yield to it, even though the refusal may result in the death of the fasting person. If people will cultivate the habit of disregarding fasts which in their opinion are taken for unworthy ends, such fasts will be robbed of the taint of coercion and undue influence. Like all human institutions, fasting can be both legitimately and illegitimately used. But as a great weapon in the armoury of satyagraha, it cannot be given up because of its possible abuse. Satyagraha has been designed as an effective substitute for violence. This use is in its infancy and, therefore, not yet perfected. But as the author of modern satyagraha I cannot give up any of its manifold uses without forfeiting my claim to handle it in the spirit of an humble seeker.

Harijan, 9-9-1933

STATEMENT ON RETIREMENT FROM CONGRESS

September 17, 1934

The rumour that I had contemplated severing all physical connections with the Congress was true. However, for the considerations urged by my friends who had come to Wardha during the meetings of the Working Committee and Parliamentary Board last week, I agreed with them that it might be safer for me to leave the Congress, if at all, after the forthcoming session. There was an intermediate course, suggested by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, of remaining in the Congress without participating in active administration of the organization, but both Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad strongly disapproved of that course. Sardar Vallabhbhai had agreed with me that the time had arrived for me to retire from the Congress, but many others would not endorse that view. After due consideration of all the pros and cons, I have adopted the safe and prudent course of postponing the final step at least till after the meeting of the Congress session in October. One attractive idea behind the insistence on postponement was that it would enable me to test the accuracy of my impression that a very large body of the Congress intelligentsia were tired of my method and views and programme based upon them, that I was a hindrance rather than a help to the natural growth of the Congress, that instead of remaining the most democratic and representative organization, it was dominated by my personality, that in it there was no free play of reason.

If I am to test the truth or otherwise of my impression, naturally, I must put before the public the reasons on which my impression is based, and my own proposals based thereon. Congressmen might vote on them and thus clearly register their opinion.

I must try to do this as briefly as I can. It has appeared to me that there is a growing and vital difference of outlook between many Congressmen and myself. I seem to be going in a direction just the opposite of what many of the most intellectual Congressmen would gladly and enthusiastically take if they were not hampered by their unexampled loyalty to me. No leader can expect greater loyalty and devotion than I have received from intellectually-minded Congressmen, even when they have protested and signified their disapproval of the policies I have laid before the Congress. For me any more to draw upon this loyalty and devotion is to put undue strain upon them. Their loyalty cannot blind my eyes to what appear to me to be fundamental differences between the Congress intelligentsia and me.

Let me state them. I put the spinning-wheel and khadi in the forefront. Hand-spinning by Congress intelligentsia has all but disappeared. The general body of them have no faith in it and yet, if I could carry their reason with me, I would substitute the four-anna franchise by personal, daily hand-spinning. The khadi clause of the Congress Constitution has been almost a dead letter from the beginning and Congressmen have not been wanting who have reminded me that I am responsible for the hypocrisy and evasion about the working of the khadi clause. I ought to have realized that it was not passed out of deep conviction, but largely out of personal loyalty to me. I must own that there is considerable force in the argument. Nevertheless

my conviction is growing that if India is to win Complete Independence in terms of the toiling millions and through unadulterated non-violence the spinning-wheel and khadi have to be as natural to the educated few as to the partially unemployed and semi-starved millions who, for not using their hands for the purpose for which nature has endowed man with them, have become almost like beasts of burden. The spinning-wheel is thus an emblem of human dignity and equality in the truest sense of the term. It is the handmaid of agriculture. It is the nation's second lung. We are perishing because we are using only one lung, yet only a few Congressmen have living faith in the India-wide potency of the wheel. The removal of the khadi clause in the constitution would mean removal of the living link between the Congress and millions whom it has from inception sought to represent, and yet if it remains, it has to be rigidly enforced. But it cannot be, if a substantial majority of Congressmen have no living faith in it.

Take again the Parliamentary Board. Though the author of non-co-operation, I am convinced that in the present circumstances of the country and in the absence of any general scheme of civil resistance, a Parliamentary Party within the Congress is a necessary part of any programme that may be framed by the Congress, but there are sharp differences of opinion among us on that point. The force with which I urged the programme at the All-India Congress Committee meeting in Patna, I know, oppressed many of our best colleagues, but they hesitated to act according to their own conviction. Up to a point suppression of one's views in favour of those of another, considered superior in wisdom or experience, is virtuous and desirable for healthy growth of organization; it becomes a terrible oppression when one is called upon to repeat the performance from day to day. Though I have never wished

any such untoward result, I cannot conceal from me or the public the tragic fact that such has been my own experience. Many have despaired of resisting me. This is a humiliating revelation to a born democrat,—I make that claim of complete identification with the poorest of mankind, an intense longing to live no better than they and a corresponding conscious effort to approach that level to the best of one's ability can entitle one to make it.

I have welcomed the formation of the Socialist group. Many of them are respected and self-sacrificing co-workers. With all this, I have fundamental differences with them on the programme published in their authorized pamphlets. But I would not, by reason of the moral pressure I may be able to exert, suppress the spread of ideas propounded in their literature. I may not interfere with the free expression of those ideas, however, distasteful some of them may be to me. If they gain ascendancy in the Congress, as they well may, I cannot remain in the Congress. For to be in active opposition should be unthinkable. Though identified with many organizations during a long period of public service, I have never accepted that position.

Then there is the policy advocated by some in regard to the States which is wholly in difference from what I have advised. I have given many an anxious hour to the question but I have not been able to alter my view.

Even on untouchability, my method of approach is perhaps different from that of many, if not of most Congressmen. For me, it is a deeply religious and moral issue. Many think that it was a profound error for me to have disturbed the course of the civil resistance struggle by taking up the question in the manner, and at the time, I did. I feel that I

would have been untrue to myself if I had taken any other course.

Last of all, take non-violence. After 14 years of trial, it still remains a policy with the majority of Congressmen, whereas it is a fundamental creed with me. That Congressmen do not still regard non-violence as a creed is no fault of their. It is undoubtedly my faulty presentation and, still more, the faulty execution that are responsible for this failure. I have no consciousness of faulty presentation or execution, but it is the only possible inference from the fact that it has not yet become an integral part of the lives of Congressmen.

And if there is uncertainty about non-violence, there must be still more about civil resistance. In spite of my 27 years of study and practice of the doctrine, I cannot claim to know all about it. The field of research is necessarily limited, as occasions for civil resistance in a man's life must not be frequent. It can only come after voluntary obedience to authority, whether of parents, teachers or other elders, religious or secular. There need be no wonder that, as the only expert, however imperfect, among us, I should have come to the conclusion that it should, for some time to come, be limited only to me. This was necessary in order to minimize the errors and mischiefs proceeding from them, as also to explore its hidden possibilities; but again for no fault of the Congressmen. It has been increasingly difficult for me to carry the reason of fellow Congressmen with me in all the resolutions recently passed on the subject, whilst they have generously voted for them.

Even the memory of the sense of oppression which they experienced at the time of voting, without an intelligent belief in these resolutions, oppresses me just as much as they were

oppressed. They and I must be free from this oppression if we are at all to grow in pursuit of what we believe to be the common goal. Hence it is necessary for all concerned to act freely and boldly according to their convictions.

I have, in my Patna statement recommending suspension of civil resistance, drawn attention to the failure of civil resistance to achieve two obvious results. If we had the full non-violent spirit in us, it should have been self-evident and should not have escaped the notice of the Government. Their Ordinances were certainly not warranted by any of the misdeeds done by or imputed to us. They were undoubtedly intended to break our spirit anyhow. But it would be wrong if we contended that civil resisters were above reproach. If we are non-violent through and through, our non-violence would have been self-evident. Nor were we able to show to the terrorists that we had greater faith in our non-violence than they in their violence. On the contrary many of us made them feel that we had the same spirit of violence. The terrorists rightly argued that if the spirit of violence was common to both the policy of doing or not doing violence was a matter of opinion. I need not repeat what I have said before, that the country has made great strides towards non-violence indeed and that many have exhibited great courage and self-sacrifice. All I want to say is that ours has not been unadulterated non-violence in thought, word and deed. It is now my paramount duty to devise ways and means of showing demonstrably to the Government and the terrorists the efficacy of non-violence as a means of achieving the right thing, including freedom in every sense of the term.

For this experiment to which my life is dedicated, I need complete detachment and absolute freedom of action. Satyagraha, of which civil resistance is but a part, is to me the uni-

versal law of life. *Satya*, in truth, is my God. I can only search Him through non-violence and in no other way. And the freedom of my country, as of the world, is surely included in the search for Truth. I cannot suspect this search for anything in this world or [another. I have entered the political life in pursuit of this search, and if it cannot carry the reason as well as the heart of educated Congressmen when I say that this search necessarily includes Complete Independence and many other things which may be part of Truth, it is plain I should work single-handed in the implicit faith that what I fail to make clear to my countrymen today shall be clear to them some day of itself; or, if God wills it, through some apt word He may put in my mouth or some apt work which He may prompt me to do in matters of such tremendous importance. A mechanical vote or a grudging assent is wholly inadequate, if not injurious to the cause itself.

I have referred to the common goal but I have begun to doubt if all Congressmen understand the same thing by the expression "Complete Independence". I want for India Complete Independence in the full English sense of that English expression. For me Purna Swaraj has an infinitely larger meaning than "Complete Independence" but even Purna Swaraj is not self-explained. No one word or compound expression will give us a meaning which all can understand. Hence, on several occasions I have given several definitions of Swaraj. I hold that they are all hopelessly incomplete even when put together, but I do not wish to labour on it.

My mention of the difficulty if not the impossibility of giving a complete definition leads me to another serious point of difference between many Congressmen and myself. I have always said, since 1904, that means and end are convertible terms and that, therefore, where the means are various and

even contradictory the end must be different and even contradictory. We have always control over the means and never on the end. But we may not bother about its content if we all employ identical means with identical connotation for them. It will be admitted that many Congressmen do not admit this (to me) obvious truth. They believe that the end justifies the means, whatever they may be.

It is the sum-total of these differences which has sterilized the existing Congress programme, because members who gave their lip-assent to it without believing in it, have naturally failed to reduce it to practice and yet I have no other programme save the Congress programme now before the country, that is, untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, total prohibition, hand-spinning with khadi cent per cent. Swadeshi, in the sense of the revival of village industries and general reorganization of the seven lakhs of villages, ought to give all satisfaction that one's love of one's country may demand. Personally I would like to bury myself in an Indian village, preferably in a Frontier village. If the Khudai Khidmatgars are truly non-violent, they will contribute the largest share to the promotion of the non-violent spirit and of Hindu-Muslim unity. For, if they are non-violent in thought, word and deed, and are lovers of Hindu-Muslim unity, surely through them we should see the accomplishment of the two things we need most in this land. The Afghan menace which we dread so much should then be a thing of the past. I am, therefore, yearning to test the truth for myself of the claim that they have imbibed the spirit of non-violence and are believers, in the heart, of unity of Hindus, Mussulmans and others. I should like also personally to deliver the message of the spinning-wheel to them in this and various such other ways. I would love to serve the Congress in my own humble manner, whether I am in or outside it.

I have reserved to the last the reference to the growing corruption in our ranks. I have already said enough about it in public. In spite of all I have said, the Congress still remains in my estimation the most powerful and the most representative organization in the country. It has a history of uninterrupted noble service and self-sacrifice, and from its inception it has weathered storms as no other institution has done. It has commanded a measure of self-sacrifice of which any country would be proud. It holds today the largest number of devoted men and women of unimpeachable character. If I must leave this organization, I shall not do so without a wrench and I should do it only when I am convinced that being outside I would serve it, i.e., the country, better than by being in it.

I propose to test the feeling of the Congress on all the points I have touched by placing before the Subjects Committee certain resolutions giving effect to the views enunciated above. The first amendment I would propose is to replace the words "legitimate and peaceful" by "truthful and non-violent". I should not have done so but for the furore of opposition which was raised against the utterly innocent use by me of the two adjectives in the place of "legitimate and peaceful". If Congressmen really believe in the necessity of truthfulness and non-violence for the attainment of our goal, they should have no hesitation about accepting the unequivocal adjectives.

The second amendment would be to replace the four-anna franchise by the delivery by every member to a Congress depot of 2,000 rounds (one round equal to four feet) per month of well-twisted even yarn of not less than 15 counts spun by himself or herself. The arguments for and against need not be repeated here. If we are to be a truly democratic body

representing even the lowest paid labour, we cannot do it better than by devising a simple labour franchise. Hand-spinning is by common consent the lowest paid labour and yet the most dignified. It is the nearest approach to adult franchise within the means of almost everyone who is willing to labour for the sake of the country for half an hour daily. Is it too much to expect the intelligentsia and the propertied classes to recognize the dignity of labour, irrespective of the material benefit it brings ? Is not labour, like learning, its own reward ? If we are true servants of masses, we would take pride in spinning for their sakes. I recall what the late Maulana Mohomed Ali used to repeat from many a platform. As the sword was the symbol of brute force and might, he would say, the wheel or the *takli* was the symbol of non-violence, service and humility. When the wheel was accepted as part of the national flag, it was surely implied that the spinning-wheel would hum in every household. If Congressmen do not believe in the message of the wheel, we must remove it from the national flag, and khaddar from the Constitution. It is intolerable that there should be unashamed fraud in the observance of the khaddar clause.

The third amendment I should propose would be that no one shall be entitled to vote at any Congress election whose name has not been on the Congress register continuously for six months without default, and who has not been a habitual wearer wholly of khaddar for that period. A great difficulty has been experienced in the working of the khaddar clause. It can be easily avoided by giving powers, subject to appeal to the President of the Congress and to the chairman of respective committees, to decide the question whether a particular voter is or is not a habitual wearer wholly of khaddar within the meaning of the Constitution. No one is to be considered such a wearer who, at the time of voting, is not manifestly

wholly clad in khaddar. But no rule, however, carefully and strictly worded, can produce satisfactory results if a large number do not voluntarily carry it out.

Experience has shown that the Congress is an unwieldy organization, even with 6,000 delegates. In practice, the full number has never attended the Congress, and when the Congress register nowhere contains a truly representative list, the delegation can hardly be claimed to be a reality. I would, therefore, have an amendment reducing the number to not more than 1,000 delegates nor more than one delegate per every thousand voters. To have the full number of delegates would mean one million voters, not an over-ambitious hope in a country having a population of 315 millions. The Congress would, by this amendment, gain in substance what it may lose in the show of numbers. The spectacular part of the session would be kept intact by making ample provision for visitors, but Reception Committees will be spared the wholly unnecessary anxiety of having to provide accommodation for an unwieldy number of delegates. Let us recognize the fact that the Congress enjoys a prestige, democratic in character and influence, not by the number of delegates and visitors it has drawn to its annual functions but by the ever-increasing amount of service it has rendered. Western democracy is on its trial. It has already proved a failure, may it be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its buttress. Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be the inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today. Nor is bulk a true test of democracy. True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within.

I have mentioned here only the principal amendments

I should propose in the Constitution. There would be other resolutions to bring out clearly the points I have touched upon in the foregoing paras. I do not need to burden this statement with them.

My fear is that even the amendments I have named will hardly commend themselves to the large number of Congressmen who will attend the Congress. Nevertheless, if I am to guide the policy of the Congress, I hold them and the resolutions in keeping with the spirit of this statement to be essential for the earliest attainment of our goal. No voluntary organization can succeed in its purpose without its resolutions and policies being carried out whole-heartedly by its members and no leader can give a good account of himself if his lead is not faithfully, ungrudgingly and intelligently followed; and this is truest of a leader who has no resource at his disposal but what truth and non-violence can supply. It follows, that there is no room for compromise in the essentials of the programme I have endeavoured to adumbrate in these paras. Let the Congressmen, [therefore examine it dispassionately and on its merits. They must eliminate me from their consideration and give effect to the dictates of their reason.

THE GREATEST FORCE

Non-violence is at the root of every one of my activities and therefore also of the three public activities on which I am just now visibly concentrating all my energy. These are untouchability, khadi, and village regeneration in general. Hindu-Muslim unity is my fourth love. But so far as any visible manifestation is concerned, I have owned defeat on that score. Let the public, however, not assume therefrom that I am inactive. If not during my lifetime, I know that after my death both Hindus and Mussulmans will bear witness that I had never ceased to yearn after communal peace.

Non-violence to be a creed has to be all pervasive. I cannot be non-violent about one activity of mine and violent about others. That would be a policy, not a life-force. That being so, I cannot be indifferent about the war that Italy is now waging against Abyssinia. But I have resisted most pressing invitation to express my opinion and give a lead to the country. Self-suppression is often necessary in the interest of Truth and Non-violence. If India had as a nation imbibed the creed of non-violence, corporate or national, I should have had no hesitation in giving a lead. But in spite of a certain hold I have on the millions of this country, I know the very grave and glaring limitation of that hold. India has an unbroken tradition of non-violence from times immemorial. But at no time in her ancient history as far as I know it, has it had complete non-violence in action prevailing the whole land. Nevertheless, it is my unshakable

belief that her destiny is to deliver the message of non-violence to mankind. It may take ages to come to fruition. But so far as I can judge, no other country will precede her in the fulfilment of that mission.

Be that as it may, it is seasonable to contemplate the implications of that matchless force. Three concrete questions were, the other day, incidentally asked by friends.

(1) What could ill-armed Abyssinia do against well-armed Italy, if she were non-violent?

(2) What could England, the greatest and the most powerful member of the League, do against determined Italy, if she (England) were non-violent in your sense of the term?

(3) What could India do, if she suddenly became non-violent in your sense of the term?

Before I answer the questions let me lay down five simple axioms of non-violence as I know it.

1. Non-violence implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible.

2. Man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.

3. Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e., the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent.

4. There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat.

5. The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory—if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.

The foregoing questions may be answered in the light of these axioms.

(1) If Abyssinia were non-violent, she would have no arms, would want none. She would make no appeal to the League or any other power for armed intervention. She would never give any cause for complaint. And Italy would find nothing to conquer if Abyssinians would not offer armed resistance, nor would they give co-operation willing or forced. Italian occupation in that case would mean that of the land without its people. That, however, is not Italy's exact object. She seeks submission of the people of the beautiful land.

(2) If Englishmen were as a nation to become non-violent at heart, they would shed imperialism, they would give up the use of arms. The moral force generated by such an act of renunciation would stagger Italy into willing surrender of her designs. England would then be a living embodiment of the axioms I have laid down. The effect of such conversion would mean the greatest miracle of all ages. And yet if non-violence is not an idle dream, some such thing has some day to come to pass somewhere. I live in that faith.

(3) The last question may be answered thus. As I have

said, India as a nation is not non-violent in the full sense of the term. Neither has she any capacity for offering violence—not because she has no arms. Physical possession of arms is the least necessity of the brave. Her non-violence is that of the weak. She betrays her weakness in many of her daily acts. She appears before the world today as a decaying nation. I mean here not in the mere political sense but essentially in the non-violent, moral sense. She lacks the ability to offer physical resistance. She has no consciousness of strength. She is conscious only of her weakness. If she were otherwise, there would be no communal problems, nor political. If she were non-violent in the consciousness of her strength, Englishmen would lose their role of distrustful conquerors. We may talk politically as we like and often legitimately blame the English rulers. But if we, as Indians, could but for a moment visualize ourselves as a strong people disdaining to strike, we should cease to fear Englishmen whether as soldiers, traders or administrators, and they to distrust us. Therefore if we become truly non-violent we should carry Englishmen with us in all we might do. In other words we being millions would be the greatest moral force in the world, and Italy would listen to our friendly word.

The reader has, I hope, by now perceived that my argument is but a feeble and clumsy attempt to prove my axioms which to be such must be self-proved.

Till my eyes of geometrical understanding had been opened, my brain was swimming, as I read and reread the twelve axioms of Euclid. After the opening of my eyes geometry seemed to be the easiest science to learn. Much more so is the case with non-violence. It is a matter of faith and experience, not of argument beyond a point. So long as the world refuses to believe, she must await a miracle, i.e.

an ocular demonstration of non-violence on a mass-scale. They say this is against human nature—non-violence is only for the individual. If so, where is the difference in kind between man and beast?

Harijan, 12-10-1935

FOR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS

A correspondent writes :

... Even if, as you profess to believe, Christ was only one of many incarnations of God, the latest of them, you must either accept His tremendous claims as of Divine Origin, or reject them as only human and fallible. And when He declares as He did to the Jews of His day-‘If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins’ or ‘I am *the* way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh into the Father, but by me,’ you must either believe Him to have been self-deceived, or deliberately false. See no other solution. I pray daily that Christ may grant you a revelation of Himself as He did to Paul of Tarsus, that before you pass of this earthly scene, you may be used to proclaim to India’s millions the sacrificial efficacy of his precious blood.

This is a typical letter from an old English friend who regularly writes such letters almost every six months. The friend is very earnest and well known to me. But there are numerous other correspondents unknown to me who write in the same strain without arguing. Since now I cannot for reasons of health write to individual writers, I use this letter as a text for a general reply. Incidentally this effort will enable the readers of *Harijan* who accept my guidance to understand the nature of my religious belief.

My correspondent is a literalist. He gives its literal

meaning to every text of the Bible in spite of its clear statement that "the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life". My very first reading of the Bible showed me that I would be repelled by many things in it if I give their literal meaning to many texts or even took every passage in it as the word of God. I found as I proceeded with my study of the scriptures of the various religions that every scripture had to be treated likewise, not excepting the Vedas or the Upanishads. Therefore the story of the immaculate conception when I interpret it mystically does not repel me. I should find it hard to believe in the literal meaning of the verses relating to the immaculate conception of Jesus. Nor would it deepen my regard for Jesus if I give those verses their literal meaning. This does not mean that the writers of the Gospels were untruthful persons. They wrote in a mood of exaltation. From my youth upward I learnt the art of estimating the value of scriptures on the basis of their ethical teaching. Miracles therefore had no interest for me. The miracles said to have been performed by Jesus, even if I had believed them literally, would not have reconciled me to any teaching that did not satisfy universal ethics. Somehow or other, words of religious teachers have for me, as I presume for millions, a living force which the same words uttered by ordinary mortals do not possess.

Jesus then to me is a great world teacher among others. He was to the devotees of his generation no doubt "the only begotten son of God". Their belief need not be mine. He affects my life no less because I regard him as among the many begotten sons of God. The adjective "begotten" has, for me, a deeper and possibly a grander meaning than its literal meaning. For me it implies spiritual birth. In his own times he was the nearest to God.

Jesus atoned for the sins of those who accepted his

teachings by being an infallible example to them. But the example was worth nothing to those who never troubled to change their lives. A regenerate outgrows the original taint even as purified gold outgrows the original alloy.

I have made the frankest admission of my many sins. But I do not carry their burden on my shoulders. If I am journeying Godward, as I feel I am, it is safe with me. For I feel the warmth of the sunshine of His presence. My austerities, fastings and prayers are, I know, of no value, if I rely upon them for reforming me. But they have an inestimable value, if they represent as I hope they do, the yearnings of a soul striving to lay his weary head in the lap of his Maker.

The *Gita* has become for me the key to the scriptures of the world. It unravels for me the deepest mysteries to be found in them. I regard them with the same reverence that I pay to the Hindu scriptures. Hindus, Mussulmans, Christians, Parsis, Jews are convenient labels. But when I tear them down, I no not know which is which. We are all children of the same God. "Verily verily I say unto you, not everyone that sayeth unto me Lord Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven shall enter the Kingdom," was said, though in different words, by all the great teachers of the world.

WHERE IS THE LIVING GOD ?

The following is taken from a letter from Bengal :*

I very much fear that what I am about to write will not remove the mist to which the correspondent alludes.

The writer supposes that I might have realized the existence of a living God. I can lay no such claim. But I do have a living faith in a living God even as I have a living faith in many things that scientists tell me. It may be retorted that what the scientists say can be verified if one followed the prescription given for realizing the facts which are taken for granted. Precisely in that manner speak the rishis and the prophets. They say anybody following the path they have trodden can realize God. The fact is we do not want to follow the path leading to realization and we won't take the testimony of eye-witnesses about the one thing that really matters. Not all the achievements of physical sciences put together can compare with that which gives us a living faith in God. Those who do not want to believe in the existence of God do not believe in the existence of anything apart from the body. Such a belief is held to be unnecessary for the progress of humanity. For such persons the weigh-

* Not reproduced here. The correspondent referring to an article by Gandhiji where he had written that people today "have no living faith in a living God", wanted him to offer some proof of the existence of God. Further he had asked if He (God) is the father of the universe why He did not prevent calamities like Bihar and Quetta earthquakes and also did not bless Gandhiji's non-violent and truthful campaign for India's independence.

tiest argument in proof of the existence of soul or God is of no avail. You cannot make a person who has stuffed his ears listen to, much less appreciate, the finest music. Even so can you not convince those about the existence of a living God who do not want the conviction.

Fortunately the vast majority of people do have a living faith in a living God. They cannot, will not, argue about it. For them "it is". Are all the scriptures of the world old women's tales of superstition? Is the testimony of the rishis, the prophets to be rejected? Is the testimony of Chaitanya, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Tukaram, Dnyandeva, Ramdas, Nanak, Kabir, Tulsidas of no value? What about Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore, Vivekanand—all modern men as well educated as the tallest among the living ones? I omit the living witnesses whose evidence would be considered unimpeachable. This belief in God has to be based on faith which transcends reason. Indeed even the so-called realization has at bottom an element of faith without which it cannot be sustained. In the very nature of things it must be so. Who can transgress the limitations of his being? I hold that complete realization is impossible in this embodied life. Nor is it necessary. A living immovable faith is all that is required for reaching the full spiritual height attainable by human beings. God is not outside this earthly case of ours. Therefore exterior proof is not of much avail, if any at all. We must ever fail to perceive Him through the senses, because He is beyond them. We can feel Him, if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can perceive or hear with our senses.

The writer wants to know why, if God is a God of

mercy and justice, He allows all the miseries and sorrows we see around us. I can give no satisfactory explanation. He imputes to me a sense of defeat and humiliation. I have no such sense of defeat, humiliation or despair. My retirement, such as it is, has nothing to do with any defeat. It is no more and no less than a course of self-purification and self-preparation; I state this to show that things are often not what they seem. It may be that what we mistake as sorrows, injustices and the like are not such in truth. If we could solve all the mysteries of the universe, we would be co-equals with God. Every drop of the ocean shares its glory but is not the ocean. Realizing our littleness during this tiny span of life, we close every morning prayer with the recitation of a verse which means : "Misery so-called is no misery nor riches so-called riches. Forgetting (or denying) God is the true misery, remembering (or faith in) God is true riches."

CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

I said at Calcutta on the 24th ultimo that Rajkot had proved a laboratory for me. The latest proof of the fact lies in the step I am now announcing. After an exhaustive discussion with my co-workers I have come to the conclusion at 6 o'clock this evening that I should renounce the advantages accruing from the Award of the Chief Justice.

I recognize my error. At the end of my fast I had permitted myself to say that it had succeeded as no previous fast had done, I now see that it was tainted with *himsa*. In taking the fast I sought immediate intervention of the Paramount Power so as to induce fulfilment of the promise made by the Thakore Saheb. This was not the way of ahimsa or conversion. It was the way of *himsa* or coercion. My fast to be pure should have been addressed only to the Thakore Saheb, and I should have been content to die if I could not have melted his heart or rather that of his adviser Durbar

* Gandhiji had gone on an indefinite fast on March 2, 1939 when the Thakore of Rajkot backed out of his promise to grant its people a responsible government. Suspecting that Thakore Saheb had been influenced by the Political Agent, Gandhiji appealed to the Viceroy to intervene who called upon the Chief Justice to decide. The decision went in favour of the people and Gandhiji broke his fast on March 7. In fact it was not the Political Agent but Thakore Saheb's own minister Durbar Shri Virawala who had influenced his decision. Now he egged on the minorities—the Muslims and Bhayats of Rajkot to press their own claims. Gandhiji realized that he had made a mistake in appealing to the Viceroy and decided to forgo the advantages of the award.

Shri Virawala. My eyes would not have been opened if I had not found unexpected difficulties in my way. Durbar Shri Virawala was no willing party to the Award. Naturally, he was in no obliging mood. He therefore took advantage of every opportunity to cause a delay. The Award, instead of making my way smooth, became a potent cause of angering the Muslims and Bhayats against me. Before the Award we had met as friends. Now I am accused of having committed a breach of promise voluntarily and without any consideration made by me. The matter was to go to the Chief Justice for decision as to whether I was guilty of the alleged breach of promise. The statements of the Muslim Council and the Girasia Association are before me. Now that I have taken the decision to renounce the Award, there is no occasion for me to answer the two cases. So far as I am concerned, the Muslims and Bhayats can have anything the Thakore Saheb may be pleased to give them. I must apologize to them for having put them to the trouble of preparing their cases.

I owe an apology to the Viceroy for the unnecessary strain I have put upon him in my weakness. I apologize to the Chief Justice for having been the cause of putting him to the labour which, had I known better, he need not have gone through. Above all, I apologize to the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Shri Virawala. So far as the latter is concerned, I have harboured evil thoughts about him. I do not here pause to consider whether the charges made against him were true or not. This is not the place to discuss them. Suffice it to say that the way of ahimsa was not and has not yet been applied to him.

And let it be said to my discredit that I have been guilty of playing what may be called a double game, i.e., hanging the sword of the Award over his head and wooing him and

expecting him of his own free will to advise the Thakore Saheb to grant liberal reforms.

This method I admit is wholly inconsistent with ahimsa. When all of a sudden I made what is known as a sporting offer to Mr. Gibson on 19th April, I discovered my weakness. But I had not the courage then and there to say, 'I do not want to have anything to do with the Award.' Instead I said, "Let the Thakore Saheb appoint his own Committee and then the Parishad people will examine the report in terms of the Award, and if it is found defective it can go to the Chief Justice." Durbar Shri Virawala detected a flaw and very properly rejected the offer, saying : "You are still hanging the Award over my head and want to become a court of appeal over the Thakore Saheb's Committee. If such is the case, you must take your pound of flesh and no more." I saw the force of his objection. I told him too that I lacked the courage then to throw the Award overboard, but I would still plead with him to come to terms with the people as if the Sardar and I had also withdrawn. He promised to try. He tried in his own fashion but not with a large heart. I do not blame him. How could I expect a large heart when he knew my faint-heartedness in clinging to the Award ?

Only trust can beget trust. I lacked it myself. But at last I have regained my lost courage. My faith in the sovereign efficacy of ahimsa burns brighter for my confession and repentances.

I must not do an injustice to my co-workers. Many of them are filled with misgivings. My exposition of ahimsa is new to them. They see no cause for my repentance. They think that I am giving up a great chance created by the Award. They think too that as a political leader I have

no right to play fast and loose with the fortunes of 75,000 souls, maybe of the whole of the people of Kathiawad. I have told them that their fears are unjustified and that every act of purification, every accession of courage, adds to the strength of the cause of a people affected by a movement of satyagraha. I have told them too that if they regard me as the general and expert of satyagraha, they must put up with what may appear to them to be my vagaries.

Having now freed the Thakore Saheb and his adviser from the oppression of the Award, I have no hesitation in appealing to them to appease the people of Rajkot by fulfilling their expectations and dispelling their misgivings.

Harijan, 20-5-1939

THE UNBRIDGEABLE GULF

SEGAON,

October 10, 1939

The following letter comes from a friend :

In the *Harijan* dated 30-9-39, on page 1 at the end of your article, you write : "Speed is not the end of life. Man sees more and lives more truly by walking to his duty." And then you subscribe : 'On the train to Simla'. I am surprised that, with all the fund of humour you possess, you could not see how the words 'On the *train* to Simla' pointed the finger of ridicule to the statement "Man sees more and lives more truly by *walking* to his duty."

Time was when this friend used to believe in my method and was a valuable supporter. Somehow or other I have now fallen from grace. He should have had no difficulty in following the rich humour behind the writing which he exposes to ridicule. But I must deprive the ridicule of its sting by informing my friend that I was in my senses when I wrote the note referred to. I might easily have avoided the exact place where it was penned. But I wanted to point to my remark and to discover to the reader the vast gulf that separates me from my ideal. Let the waverers take heart from the fact that though my note containing the flat contradiction of the ideal has provided my friend with mirth, I have got the credit for trying my best to live up to the ideals I may profess. If I am to make an ever-increasing approach to my ideal, I must let the world see my weaknesses and failures so that I may be

saved from hypocrisy and so that even for very shame I would try my utmost to realize the ideal. The contradiction pointed out by the friend also shows that between the ideal and practice there always must be an unbridgeable gulf. The ideal will cease to be one if it becomes possible to realize it. The pleasure lies in making the effort, not in its fulfilment. For, in our progress towards the goal we ever see more and more enchanting scenery.

Coming, however, to the friend's gibe let me tell him and the reader that I could pen those lines because it is never a pleasure to me to travel by motor or rail or even a cart. It is always a pleasure to walk. Nor should I mind in the least if every rail was removed and men, except the sick and the maimed, had to walk to their business. I cannot only imagine but am working for a civilization in which possession of a car will be considered no merit and railways will find no place. It would not be for me an unhappy event if the world became once more as large as it used to be at one time. *Hind Swaraj* was written in 1908. Since then it has undergone many editions and has been translated in many languages of the world. I was asked last year by Shrimati Sophia Wadia to write a foreword for the edition that she was bringing out. I had the pleasure, therefore, of having to reread it carefully. The reader may know that I could not revise a single idea. I had no desire to revise the language. It is a fair translation of the original in Gujarati. The key to understand that incredibly simple (so simple as to be regarded foolish) booklet is to realize that it is not an attempt to go back to the so-called ignorant, dark ages. But it is an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness. I have pictured that as my ideal. I shall never reach it myself and hence cannot expect the nation to do so. But the modern rage for variety, for flying through the air, for multiplicity of wants,

etc., have no fascination for me. They deaden the inner being in us. The giddy heights which man's ingenuity is attempting, take us away from our Maker who is nearer to us than the nails are to the flesh which they cover.

Therefore even whilst I am travelling at the rate of 40 miles per hour, I am conscious that it is a necessary evil, and that my best work is to be done in little Segaon, containing 700 souls, and in the neighbouring villages to which I can walk. But being a highly practical man I do not avoid railway travelling or motoring for the mere sake of looking foolishly consistent. Let the reader know that during the hurricane Harijan tour that Thakkar Bapa had arranged for me I had gently suggested to him that I would like to do the whole year's tour on foot. He would not listen. And we had violent demonstrations during the tour. Twice or oftener we escaped serious injury and it might have been even death. When we reached Puri, there was fear of bloodshed. So I put my foot down and insisted on performing the remaining pilgrimage on foot. Thakkar Bapa readily consented. Well, the demonstrators who were prepared only for demonstrations by rail and motor could not overtake the pilgrims who covered only 1 to 10 miles per day in two stages. This was the most effective part of our tour. The awakening was solid. Our experiences were rich. And the demonstrators had no excitement left for them. They had no desire to kill me in cold blood. They were out for sensations. Sensations are not to be had with non-violent men and women walking to their mission without any fear of man and in the certain knowledge of having God as their infallible Guide and Protector.

BAFFLING SITUATION

Jawaharlal, born democrat as he is, had arranged for a free talk between the Executive Council of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee and me. We had three such talks, I had expected that the talks would result in a parting of the ways. Among the Congressmen whom I was facing there were some who had laughed at the charkha and non-violence. But to my utter astonishment I found them reconciled to both. It is a baffling situation both for Congressmen and me.

I do not know whether I am wise in bearing the heavy responsibility of leading Congressmen who only the other day had no faith in me. Are they not paying too great a price for my leadership in a battle? If they render obedience without faith, is it good for them or me? Can I lead them to success? If I was not good enough in peace, how can I be good in war? There was no peace. The Congress is at war with Great Britain till Independence is won. War had never ceased; only civil disobedience had been suspended for better and greater preparation. Congressmen who did not obey instructions during the preparatory period were surely not fit soldiers on active duty. And yet I could not distrust the responsible men who faced me in Allahabad. What is true of them is true of the other Congressmen in the other provinces. And so I am shouldering the burden.

Let me then think aloud. I hope that Congressmen will make it a point to read *Harijan* as if it was a weekly bulletin containing instructions for them.

To the impatient Congressmen I say : I see no immediate prospect of declaring civil disobedience. There can be no civil disobedience for the sake of embarrassing Great Britain. It will come when it becomes clearly inevitable. Probably it will come by the goading of the official world. I do not doubt the honesty of the Viceroy or that of the Secretary of State. At the same time I have no doubt whatsoever that they are in error because they cannot get out of the old rut to which they are used. We must give them time to correct themselves. We must do real propaganda by way of educating the public both here and abroad. We cannot all of a sudden dispel the surrounding misunderstandings, not merely on the part of the British people but of our own countrymen. There is no mistaking the fact that many non-Congress Muslims honestly think that the Congress ministers did not pay enough heed to Muslim complaints. Congressmen wedded to non-violence have to give special heed to the complaints of non-Congress Muslims. It is no use saying that they are frivolous. I know myself that many complaints have been frivolous. But we have to be patient and courteous enough to take them seriously and endeavour to show clearly that they are frivolous. I do not wish to suggest that pains were not taken to deal with them. I am just now concerned with the phenomenon that the complaints persist. We must, therefore, give time to demonstrating that there never has been anything in the complaints. If in the course of further investigation we discover errors, we must make amends. We must prove to the Muslim countrymen and to the world that the Congress does not want independence at the sacrifice of a single legitimate interest, be it Muslim or other. We may leave no stone unturned to carry the minorities with us. This meticulous care for the rights of the least among us is the *sine qua non* of non-violence.

If it is true, as it is, that for the British Government to

plead want of communal unity as a bar to independence is wrong, it is equally true that this discord is, nevertheless, a serious handicap in our march towards swaraj. If we had the Muslim League and others with us, our demand would become irresistible.

So much for the external difficulties. Not till we have given sufficient time to their solution, can we possibly think of civil disobedience.

The internal weakness is no less great. I see a vital connection between the charkha and non-violence. Even as certain minimum qualifications are indispensable in a soldier in arms, so are certain other and even opposite qualifications indispensable in a non-violent soldier, i.e. a satyagrahi. One of these latter is adequate skill in spinning and its anterior processes. A satyagrahi occupies himself in productive work. There is no easier and better productive work for millions than spinning. What is more, it has been an integral part of the non-violent programme since its commencement. Civilization based on non-violence must be different from that organized for violence. Let not Congressmen trifle with this fundamental fact. I repeat what I have said a thousand times that, if millions spin for swaraj and in the spirit of non-violence, there will probably be no necessity for civil disobedience. It will be a constructive effort such as the world has not witnessed before. It is the surest method of converting the "enemy".

The Working Committee desired to appoint me as its sole representative to carry on negotiations that may be necessary and to conduct the campaign of civil disobedience if they failed. It was a burden I could not carry. Being boxed up in Segaoon, I have no direct touch with the people.

I have no confidence, I should have none, in my unaided judgment requiring an accurate first-hand knowledge of many facts. I could only act with the constant guidance and direction of the Working Committee. I shall carry on no negotiations to finality. I should be pleased if I was relieved of the burden. But I shall not shrink from any responsibility, so long as I carry the confidence and affection of the Working Committee and Congressmen in general and so long as I feel that I have the requisite qualifications.

Harijan, 2-12-1939

WHAT IS WOMAN'S ROLE

I had flattered myself that my contribution to the woman's cause definitely began with the discovery of satyagraha. But the writer of the letter* is of opinion that the fair sex requires treatment different from men. If it is so, I do not think any man will find the correct solution. No matter how much he tries, he must fail because nature has made him different from woman. Only the toad under the harrow knows where it pinches him. Therefore ultimately woman will have to determine with authority what she needs. My own opinion is that just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help.

But somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has believed in the truth of man's interested teaching that she is inferior to him. But the seers among men have recognized her equal status.

Nevertheless there is no doubt that at some point there is bifurcation. Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocations of the two must also be

* Not reproduced here.

different. The duty of motherhood, which the vast majority of women will always undertake, requires qualities which man need not possess. She is passive, he is active. She is essentially mistress of the house. He is the bread-winner, she is the keeper and distributor of the bread. She is the care-taker in every sense of the term. The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care the race must become extinct.

In my opinion it is degrading both for man and woman that woman should be called upon or induced to forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end. In trying to ride the horse that man rides, she brings herself and him down. The sin will be on man's head for tempting or compelling his companion to desert her special calling. There is as much bravery in keeping one's home in good order and condition as there is in defending it against attack from without.

As I have watched millions of peasants in their natural surroundings and as I watch them daily in little Sevagram, natural division of spheres of work has forced itself on my attention. There are no women blacksmiths and carpenters. But men and women work on the fields, the heavier work being done by the males. The women keep and manage the homes. They supplement the meagre resources of the family, but man remains the main bread-winner.

The division of the spheres of the work being recognized the general qualities and culture required are practically the same for both the sexes.

My contribution to the great problem lies in my presen-

ting for acceptance truth and ahimsa in every walk of life, whether for individuals or nations. I have hugged the hope that in this woman will be the unquestioned leader, and, having thus found her place in human evolution, will shed her inferiority complex. If she is able to do this successfully, she must resolutely refuse to believe in the modern teaching that everything is determined and regulated by the sex impulse. I fear I have put the proposition rather clumsily. But I hope my meaning is clear. I do not know that the millions of men who are taking an active part in the war are obsessed by the sex spectre. Nor are the peasants working together in their fields worried or dominated by it. This is not to say or suggest that they are free from the instinct implanted in man and woman. But it most certainly does not dominate their lives as it seems to dominate the lives of those who are saturated with the modern sex literature. Neither man nor woman has time for such things when he or she is faced with the hard fact of living life in its grim reality.

I have suggested in these columns that woman is the incarnation of ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who, again, suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in satyagraha which does not require the learning

that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.

My good nurse in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, as I was lying on a sick-bed years ago, told me the story of a woman who refused to take chloroform because she would not risk the life of the babe she was carrying. She had to undergo a painful operation. The only anaesthetic she had was her love for the babe, to save whom no suffering was too great. Let not women, who can count many such heroines among them, ever despise their sex or deplore that they were not born men. The contemplation of that heroine often makes me envy woman the status that is hers, if she only knew. There is as much reason for man to wish that he was born woman as for woman to do otherwise. But the wish is fruitless. Let us be happy in the state to which we are born and do the duty for which nature has destined us.

Harijan, 24-2-1940

APPEAL TO EVERY BRITON

July 2, 1940

In 1896 I addressed an appeal to every Briton in South Africa on behalf of my countrymen who had gone there as labourers or traders and their assistants. It had its effect. However important it was from my viewpoint, the cause which I pleaded then was insignificant compared with the cause which prompts this appeal. I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war for the adjustment of relations and other matters. Your statesmen have declared that this is a war on behalf of democracy. There are many other reasons given in justification. You know them all by heart. I suggest that at the end of the war, whichever way it ends, there will be no democracy left to represent democracy. This war has descended upon mankind as a curse and a warning. It is a curse inasmuch as it is brutalizing man on a scale hitherto unknown. All distinctions between combatants and non-combatants have been abolished. No one and nothing is to be spared. Lying has been reduced to an art. Britain was to defend small nationalities. One by one they have vanished, at least for the time being. It is also a warning. It is a warning that, if nobody reads the writing on the wall, man will be reduced to the state of the beast, whom he is shaming by his manners. I read the writing when the hostilities broke out. But I had not the courage to say the word. God has given me the courage to say it before it is too late.

I appeal for cessation of hostilities, not because you are

too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazism. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as the Germans. If that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win the war. In other words, you will have to be more ruthless than the Nazis. No cause, however just, can warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated today cannot be called just.

I do not want Britain to be defeated, nor do I want her to be victorious in a trial of brute strength, whether expressed through the muscle or the brain. Your muscular bravery is an established fact. Need you demonstrate that your brain is also as unrivalled in destructive power as your muscle? I hope you do not wish to enter into such an undignified competition with the Nazis. I venture to present you with a nobler and a braver way, worthy of the bravest soldier. I want you to fight Nazism without arms, or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island, with your many beautiful buildings. You will give all these, but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourself, man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them.

This process or method, which I have called non-

violent non-co-operation, is not without considerable success in its use in India. Your representatives in India may deny my claim. If they do, I shall feel sorry for them. They may tell you that our non-co-operation was not wholly non-violent, that it was born of hatred. If they give that testimony, I won't deny it. Had it been wholly non-violent, if all the non-co-operators had been filled with goodwill towards you, I make bold to say that you who are India's masters would have become her pupils and, with much greater skill than we have, perfected this matchless weapon and met the German and Italian friends' menace with it. Indeed the history of Europe during the past few months would then have been written differently. Europe would have been spared seas of innocent blood, the rape of so many small nations, and the orgy of hatred.

This is no appeal made by a man who does not know his business. I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of that search the discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.

I claim to have been a life-long and wholly disinterested friend of the British people. At one time I used to be also a lover of your empire. I thought that it was doing good to India. When I saw that in the nature of things it could do

no good, I used, and am still using, the non-violent method to fight Imperialism. Whatever the ultimate fate of my country, my love for you remains, and will remain, undiminished. My non-violence demands universal love, and you are not a small part of it. It is that love which has prompted my appeal to you.

May God give power to every word of mine. In His name I began to write this, and in His name I close it. May your statesmen have the wisdom and courage to respond to my appeal. I am telling His excellency the Viceroy that my services are at the disposal of His Majesty's Government, should they consider them of any practical use in advancing the object of my appeal.

Harijan, 6-7-1940

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

October 15, 1940

I have had three days' discussion with the Working Committee. During it I unfolded my plan of civil disobedience in so far as I was able to envisage it. Although I have sole charge of the campaign I could not think of taking the first step without consultation with the members of the Working Committee. In non-violent action one has to carry the co-workers with one through the mind and the heart. There is no other way to enforce discipline or obedience to instructions. I must admit that it was not plain sailing for me. There was stubborn dissent from two members. I tried hard to carry conviction to them but I fear I failed. They will, however, yield obedience so far as it is possible for them for the sake of discipline. The difference of opinion solely centred round the quantity of civil disobedience and the restrictions with which it was hedged.

I disclose this part of the discussion to show that my plan will fall short of the expectations of those whom the dissenters represent. I would simply say to them, "Wait patiently and see what happens. Carry out instructions to the best of your ability. Do nothing to thwart the plan. If your reason rebels against it, you will serve the cause by seceding and educating the people along your own lines. That would be straight, brave and stimulating in that the people will learn to appraise the value of different methods. You will cause confusion by preaching from the Congress platform anything contrary to the official programme, especially when the whole

organization becomes like an army. It matters little whether one person offers civil disobedience or many. The rest have to render such support as they be called upon to do."

The plan is simply this. Direct action will be commenced by Shri Vinoba Bhave and for the time being confined to him only. And since it is to be confined to individual civil disobedience and that too of him only, it will be so conducted by him as to exclude others directly or indirectly. But since it is concerned with freedom of speech the public will be involved to an extent. It is open to them either to listen to him or not.

But much will depend upon what the Government wish to do. In spite of all attempts to confine civil disobedience to individuals and for the moment to one only, they can precipitate a crisis by making it a crime to listen to him or read anything written by him. But I think and believe that they do not want to invite any trouble though they hold themselves in readiness to cope with every trouble that may face them.

I have discussed with Shri Vinoba various plans so as to avoid all unnecessary friction or risks. The idea is to make all action as strictly non-violent as is humanly possible. One man's violence, veiled or open, cannot go beyond a certain limit, but within that limit it would be despised and ridiculed by the non-believer in it. In truth, while the effect of a given violent action can be reduced to mathematical terms, that of non-violent action defies all calculations and has been known to falsify many that have been hazarded. How far I shall be able to present an example of unadulterated non-violence remains to be seen.

Who is Vinoba Bhave and why has he been selected ? He is an undergraduate having left college after my return to India in 1916. He is a Sanskrit scholar. He joined the Ashram almost at its inception. He was among the first members. In order to better qualify [himself he took one year's leave to prosecute further studies in Sanskrit. And practically at the same hour at which he had left the Ashram a year before he walked into it without notice. I had forgotten that he was due to arrive that day. He has taken part in every menial activity of the Ashram from scavenging to cooking. Though he has a marvellous memory and is a student by nature, he has devoted the largest part of his time to spinning in which he has specialized as very few have. He believes in universal spinning being the central activity which will remove the poverty in the villages and put life into their deadness. Being a born teacher he has been of the utmost assistance to Ashadevi in her development of the scheme of education through handicrafts. Shri Vinoba has produced a text-book taking spinning as the handicraft. It is original in conception. He has made scoffers realize that spinning is the handicraft *par excellence* which lends itself to being effectively used for basic education. He has revolutionized takli-spinning and drawn out its hitherto unknown possibilities. For perfect spinning probably he has no rival in all India.]

He has abolished every trace of untouchability from his heart. He believes in communal unity with the same passion that I have. In order to know the best mind of Islam he gave one year to the study of the Koran in the original. He therefore learnt Arabic. He found this study necessary for cultivating a living contact with the Muslims living in his neighbourhood.

He has an army of disciples and workers who would rise

to any sacrifice at his bidding. He is responsible for producing a young man who has dedicated himself to the service of lepers. Though an utter stranger to medicine this worker has by singular devotion mastered the method of treatment of lepers and is now running several clinics for their care. Hundreds owe their cure to his labours. He has published a handbook in Marathi for the treatment of lepers. Vinoba was for years Director of the Mahila Ashram in Wardha. His devotion to the cause of *Daridranarayan* took him first to a village near Wardha, and now he has gone still further and lives in Pavnar, five miles from Wardha, from where he has established contact with villagers through the disciples he has trained.

He believes in the necessity of the political independence of India. He is an accurate student of history. But he believes that real independence of the villagers is impossible without the constructive programme of which khadi is the centre. He believes that the charkha is the most suitable outward symbol of non-violence which has become an integral part of his life. He has taken an active part in the previous satyagraha campaigns. He has never been in the lime-light on the political platform. With many co-workers he believes that silent constructive work with civil disobedience in the background is far more effective than the already heavily crowded political platform. And he thoroughly believes that non-violent resistance is impossible without a heart belief in and practice of constructive work.

Vinoba is an out-and-out war resister. But he respects equally with his own the conscience of those who, whilst not being out-and-out war resisters, have yet strong conscientious objection to participation in the present war. Though Vinoba represents both the types—I may want to select another who

will represent only one type, namely conscientious objection to participation in the present war.

It was necessary to introduce Vinoba at length to the public in order to justify my choice. This will perhaps be the last civil disobedience struggle which I shall have conducted. Naturally I would want it to be as flawless as it can be. Moreover the Congress has declared that it will avoid all avoidable embarrassment to the Government consistently with its own existence. For that reason too I had to strive to produce the highest quality irrespective of quantity.

But Vinoba must fail, as I must, if we do not represent the Congress, let alone the whole nation. And we shall certainly not represent either if they do not give us full-hearted co-operation which is ceaseless prosecution of the constructive programme. It is not vocal co-operation that is required. It is co-operation in work that is needed. The signs of such co-operation will be phenomenal progress in spinning, complete disappearance of untouchability, and increasing friendliness between communities, and an increasing sense of justice in every walk of life. Unless rock-bottom justice and equality pervade society surely there is no non-violent atmosphere. Above all, there should be no civil disobedience but what is sanctioned by me. This is peremptory obligation binding on every Congressman. If it is disregarded, there is no co-operation. The representative character belonging to Vinoba and me is then challenged. And I can say with confidence that, if the full-hearted co-operation I want is forthcoming, not only will the issue of freedom of speech be decided in our favour but we shall have gone very near Independence. Let those who will, take me at my word. They will have lost nothing and will find that they had contributed greatly to the movement of freedom through truthful and non-

violent means.

Let me repeat the issue. On the surface it is incredibly narrow—the right to preach against war as war or participation in the present war. Both are matters of conscience for those who hold either view. Both are substantial rights. Their exercise can do no harm to the British if their pretension that to all intents and purposes India is an independent country is at all true. If India is very much a dependency in fact as it is in law, whatever the British get from India can never be regarded as voluntary, it must be regarded as impressed. This battle of life and death cannot be won by impressed levies, however large. They may win if they have the moral backing of an India truly regarded as free. Non-violent Congress cannot wish ill to Britain. Nor can it help her through arms since it seeks to gain her own freedom not through arms but through unadulterated non-violence. And the Congress vanishes, if, at the crucial moment, it suppresses itself for fear of consequences or otherwise by ceasing to preach non-violent means. So when we probe the issue deep enough we discover that it is a matter of life and death for us. If we vindicate that right, all is well with us. If we do not, all is lost. We cannot then win swaraj through non-violent means.

I know that India has not one mind. There is a part of India that is war-minded and will learn the art of war through helping the British. The Congress has no desire, therefore, to surround ammunition factories or barracks and prevent people from doing what they like. We want to tell the people of India that, if they will win swaraj through non-violent means, they may not co-operate militarily with Britain in the prosecution of the war.

This right of preaching against participation in war is

being denied to us, and we have to fight against the denial. Therefore while that right will be exercised only by those whom I may select for the purpose, all the other activities of the Congress will continue as before unless the Government interfere with them

A question has been asked why, if I attach so much importance to quality, I do not offer civil resistance myself. I have already said that unlike as on previous occasions I do not wish to do so for the very good reason that my imprisonment is likely to cause greater embarrassment to the authorities than anything else the Congress can do. I want also to remain outside to cope with any contingency that may arise. My going to jail may be interpreted as a general invitation to all Congressmen to follow suit. They will not easily distinguish between my act and speech. Lastly, I do not know how things will shape. I myself do not know the next step. I do not know the Government plan. I am a man of faith. My reliance is solely on God. One step is enough for me. The next He will make clear to me when time for it comes. And who knows that I shall be an instrument for bringing about peace not only between Britain and India but also between the warring nations of the Earth. This last wish will not be taken for vanity by those who believe that my faith is not a sham but a reality greater than the fact that I am penning these lines.

ECONOMIC EQUALITY

December 1941

Economic equality is the master-key to non-violent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the internal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class near by cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good.

I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship in spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it. It is true that it is difficult to reach. So is non-violence. But we made up our minds in 1920 to negotiate that steep ascent. We have found it worth the effort. It involves a daily-growing appreciation of the working of non-violence. It is expected that Congressmen will make a diligent search and reason out for themselves the why and the wherefore of non-violence. They should ask themselves how the existing inequalities can be

abolished violently or non-violently. I think we know the violent way. It has not succeeded anywhere.

This non-violent experiment is still in the making. We have nothing much yet to show by way of demonstration. It is certain, however, that the method has begun to work though ever so slowly in the direction of equality. And since non-violence is a process of conversion, the conversion, if achieved, must be permanent. A society or a nation constructed non-violently must be able to withstand attack upon its structure from without or within. We have moneyed Congressmen in the organization. They have to lead the way. This fight provides an opportunity for the closest heart-searching on the part of every individual Congressman. If ever we are to achieve equality, the foundation has to be laid now. Those who think that the major reforms will come after the advent of swaraj are deceiving themselves as to the elementary working of non-violent swaraj. It will not drop from heaven all of a sudden one fine morning. But it has to be built up brick by brick by corporate self-effort. We have travelled a fair way in that direction. But a much longer and weary distance has to be covered before we can behold swaraj in its glorious majesty. Every Congressman has to ask himself what he has done towards the attainment of economic equality.

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

April 5, 1942

Japan is knocking at our gates. What are we to do in a non-violent way? If we were a free country, things could be done non-violently to prevent the Japanese from entering the country. As it is, non-violent resistance could commence the moment they effected a landing. Thus non-violent resisters would refuse them any help, even water. For it is no part of their duty to help anyone to steal their country. But if a Japanese had missed his way and was dying of thirst and sought help as a human being, a non-violent resister, who may not regard anyone as his enemy, would give water to the thirsty one. Suppose the Japanese compel resisters to give them water, the resisters must die in the act of resistance. It is conceivable that they will exterminate all resisters. The underlying belief in such non-violent resistance is that the aggressor will, in time, be mentally and even physically tired of killing non-violent resisters. He will begin to search what this new (for him) force is which refuses co-operation without seeking to hurt, and will probably desist from further slaughter. But the resisters may find that the Japanese are utterly heartless and that they do not care how many they kill. The non-violent resisters will have won the day inasmuch as they will have preferred extermination to submission.

But things will not happen quite so simply as I have put them. There are at least four parties in the country.

First the British and the army they have brought into being. The Japanese declare that they have no designs upon India. Their quarrel is only with the British. In this they are assisted by some Indians who are in Japan. It is difficult to guess how many, but there must be a fairly large number who believe in the declaration of the Japanese and think that they will deliver the country from the British yoke and retire. Even if the worst happens, their fatigue of the British yoke is so great that they would even welcome the Japanese yoke for a change. This is the second party. The third are the neutrals, who though not non-violent will help neither the British nor the Japanese.

The fourth and last are non-violent resisters. If they are only a few, their resistance will be ineffective except as an example for the future. Such resisters will calmly die wherever they are but will not bend the knee before the aggressor. They will not be deceived by promises. They do not seek deliverance from the British yoke through the help of a third party. They believe implicitly in their own way of fighting and no other. Their fight is on behalf of the dumb millions who do not perhaps know that there is such a thing as deliverance. They have neither hatred for the British nor love for the Japanese. They wish well to both as to all others. They would like both to do what is right. They believe that non-violence alone will lead men to do right under all circumstances. Therefore, if for want of enough companions non-violent resisters cannot reach the goal, they will not give up their way but pursue it to death.

The task before the votaries of non-violence is very difficult. But no difficulty can baffle men who have faith in their mission.

This is going to be a long drawn out agony. Let non-

violent resisters not make impossible attempts. Their powers are limited. A resister in Kerala is not physically responsible for the defence of Assam which is just now in imminent danger. If Assam is non-violently inclined, it is well able to take care of itself. If it is not, no party of non-violent resisters from Kerala can help it or any other province. Kerala can help Assam etc. by demonstrating its non-violence in Kerala itself. The Japanese army, if it gets a foothold in India, will not stop at Assam. In order to defeat the British, it has to overrun the whole country. The British will fight every inch of the ground. Loss of India will probably be admission of complete defeat for them. But whether it is so or not, it is quite clear that Japan will not rest till India is wholly in her hands. Hence non-violent resisters must remain at their posts wherever they are.

One thing has to be made clear. Where the British army is actually engaging the "enemy", it would be perhaps improper for direct resistance to function. It will not be non-violent resistance when it is mixed with, or allies itself to, violence.

Let me therefore reiterate what I have said so often. The best preparation for, and even the expression of non-violence lies in the determined pursuit of the constructive programme. Anyone who believes that without the backing of the constructive programme he will show non-violent strength when the testing time comes will fail miserably. It will be, like the attempt of a starving unarmed man to match his physical strength against a fully fed and panoplied soldier, foredoomed to failure. He who has no belief in the constructive programme has, in my opinion, no concrete feeling for the starved millions. He who is devoid of that feeling cannot fight non-violently. In actual practice the expansion of my

non-violence has kept exact pace with that of my identification with starved humanity. I am still far from the non-violence of my conception, for am I not still far away from the identification of my conception with dumb humanity?

Harijan, 12-4-1942

APPEAL TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

August 3, 1942

Dear Friends,

As I am supposed to be the spirit behind the much discussed and equally well abused resolution of the working Committee of the Indian National Congress on Independence, it has become necessary for me to explain my position. For I am not unknown to you. I have in America perhaps the largest number of friends in the West—not even excepting Great Britain. British friends knowing me personally are more discerning than the American. In America I suffer from the well-known malady called hero-worship. Good Dr. Holmes, until recently of the Unity Church of New York, without knowing me personally became my advertising agent. Some of the nice things he said about me I never knew myself. So I receive often embarrassing letters from America expecting me to perform miracles. Dr Holmes was followed much later by the late Bishop Fisher who knew me personally in India. He very nearly dragged me to America but fate had ordained otherwise and I could not visit your vast and great country with its wonderful people.

Moreover, you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay on the "Duty of Civil Disobedience" scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose *Unto This Last* transformed me overnight from a lawyer and city-dweller

into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station; and Russia gave me in Tolstoy a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. He blessed my movement in South Africa when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn. It was he who had prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the downtrodden people of the earth. So you will see that I have not approached the present task in any spirit of enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of *Unto This Last*, I could not be guilty of approving of Fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty.

I invite you to read my formula of withdrawal or as it has been popularly called "Quit India" with this background. You may not read into it more than the context warrants.

I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim "Truth is God" instead of the usual one "God is Truth". That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being. With this Truth as witness between you and me, I assert that I would not have asked my country to invite Great Britain to withdraw her rule over India, irrespective of any demand to the contrary, if I had not seen at once that, for the sake of Great Britain and the Allied cause, it was necessary for Britain boldly to perform the duty of freeing India from bondage. Without this essential act of tardy justice, Britain could not justify her position before the un murmuring World Conscience, which is there nevertheless.

Singapore, Malaya and Burma taught me that the disaster must not be repeated in India. I make bold to say that it cannot be averted unless Britain trusts the people of India to use their liberty in favour of the Allied cause. By that supreme act of justice Britain would have taken away all cause for the seething discontent of India. She will turn the growing ill-will into active goodwill. I submit that it is worth all the battleships and airships that your wonder-working engineers and financial resources can produce.

I know that interested propaganda has filled your ears and eyes with distorted versions of the Congress position. I have been painted as a hypocrite and enemy of Britain under disguise. My demonstrable spirit of accommodation has been described as my inconsistency, proving me to be an utterly unreliable man. I am not going to burden this letter with proof in support of my assertions. If the credit I have enjoyed in America will not stand me in good stead, nothing I may argue in self-defence will carry conviction against the formidable but false propaganda that has poisoned American ears.

You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot therefore disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a grievous wrong to the Allied cause, if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time. Just think of it. Is there anything wrong in the Congress demanding unconditional recognition of India's independence? It is being said, "But this is not the time." We say: "This is the psychological moment for that recognition. For then and then only can there be irresistible opposition to Japanese aggression. It is of immense value to the Allied cause if it is also of equal value to India. The

Congress has anticipated and provided for every possible difficulty in the way of recognition. I want you to look upon the immediate recognition of India's independence as a war measure of first-class magnitude.

I am,
Your friend,
M.K. GANDHI

Harijan, 9-8-1942

STATEMENT ON SAN FRANCISCO TALKS

April 17, 1945

Though I know that silence is better than the spoken or written word, there are well-defined limitations to the application of the maxim. The San Francisco Conference is announced to meet shortly. I do not know its agenda. Probably no outsider knows it. Whatever it may be, the Conference will have much to do with the world-to-be after the so-called end of the war. I very much fear that behind the structure of world security sought to be raised lurk mistrust and fear which breed war. Therefore, as a life-long believer in peace as against war, it seems well for me to record my convictions in the matter.

I reiterate my conviction that there will be no peace for the Allies or the world, unless they shed their belief in the efficacy of war and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud and are determined to hammer out real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations. Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to all war. In such a world only, the militarily weaker nations will be free from the fear of intimidation or exploitation.

(1) An indispensable preliminary to peace is the complete freedom of India from all foreign control, not merely because it is a classic example of imperialist domination but specially because it is a big, ancient and cultured country

which has fought for its freedom since 1920 deliberately by truth and non-violence as its only weapon.

Though the Indian soldier has fought, not for India's freedom, he has shown during this war, as never before that he is at least an equal to the best in his fighting qualities. I cite this to answer the charge that India's peaceful struggle is due to its lack of soldierly quality. The inevitable deduction that I draw from this is that non-violence of the strong is infinitely braver than their violence. That India may not yet have evolved such non-violence is another matter. If it is the case, it does not detract from the statement that it has battled non-violently for freedom and that not without considerable success.

(2) Freedom of India will demonstrate to all the exploited races of the earth that their freedom is very near and that in no case will they henceforth be exploited.

(3) Peace must be just. In order to be that, it must neither be punitive nor vindictive. Germany and Japan should not be humiliated. The strong are never vindictive. Therefore, the fruits of peace must be equally shared. The effort then will be to turn them into friends. The Allies can prove their democracy by no other means.

(4) It follows from the foregoing that there will be no armed peace imposed upon the forcibly disarmed. All will be disarmed. There will be an international police force to enforce the slightest terms of peace. Even this retention of an international police will be a concession to human weakness, not by any means an emblem of peace.

If these foregoing essentials of peace are accepted, it

follows that the camouflage of Indian representation through Indians nominated by British imperialism should be dropped. Such representation will be worse than no representation. Either India at San Francisco is represented by an elected representative or represented not at all.

The following from the Congress Resolution of 8th August 1942 shows clearly that what free India stands for :

While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world Federation of Free Nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world Federal Defence Force would keep world peace and prevent aggression. An independent India would gladly join such a world federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems.

Thus the demand for Indian independence is in no way selfish. Its nationalism spells internationalism.

INDEPENDENCE

April 29, 1946

Friends have repeatedly challenged me to define independence. At the risk of repetition, I must say that independence of my dream means *Ramarajya*, i. e. the Kingdom of God on Earth. I do not know what it will be like in Heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future cannot be very unlike.

In concrete terms, then, the independence should be political, economic and moral.

“Political” necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form.

“Economic” means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest. This can take place only by capital or capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.

“Moral” means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of *Ramarajya* excludes replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and, therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral height.

Though Mr. Churchill is claimed to have won the war

for the British, he has in his Aberdeen speech uttered words of wisdom from the standpoint of a radical non-violent reformer. He knows, if any panoplied warrior knows, what havoc the two wars of our generation have wrought. Only I must warn the public against the pessimistic note underlying the speech. Nothing will be found to have gone wrong if mankind recoils from the horrors of War. The blood-letting that men have undergone to the point of whiteness will not have been in vain, if it has taught us that we must freely give our own blood in the place of taking other peoples' blood, be the cause ever so noble or ignoble.

If the Cabinet Mission "delivers the goods", India will have to decide whether attempting to become a military power she would be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth-rate power in the world without a message in answer to the pessimism described above, or whether she will by further refining and continuing her non-violent policy prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using her hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory.

Harijan, 5-5-1946

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

July 7, 1947

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are subdivisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic "no". Non-violence is embedded in truth and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

BREAKING OF THE FAST*

January 18, 1948

I embarked on the fast in the name of Truth whose familiar name is God. Without living Truth God is nowhere. In the name of God we have indulged in lies, massacres of people without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, children or infants. We have indulged in abductions, forcible conversions and we have done all this shamelessly. I am not aware if anybody has done these things in the name of Truth. With that same name on my lips I have broken the fast. The agony of our people was unbearable. Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendrababu brought over a hundred people representing the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and representatives of refugees from the Punjab, the Frontier Province and Sind. In this very representative company were present Zahid Hussainsaheb, the High Commissioner for Pakistan, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi and the Deputy Commissioner, General Shah Nawazkhan, representing the Azad Hind Fauj (I.N.A.). Pandit Nehru, sitting like a statue, was of course there, as also Maulanasaheb. Dr. Rajendrababu read a document in Hindustani signed by these representatives, asking me not to put any further strain on them and end the agony by breaking the fast. Telegrams after telegrams have come from Pakistan and the Indian

*Gandhiji had commenced a fast on 13th January 1948, for an indeterminate period, to bring about a reunion of hearts among communities.

Union urging me to do the same. I could not resist the counsel of all these friends. I could not disbelieve their pledge that come what may, there would be complete friendship between the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jews, a friendship not to be broken. To break that friendship would be to break the nation.

SPIRIT OF THE VOW

As I write, comforting telegrams are deluging me. How I wish that God will keep me fit enough and sane enough to render the service of humanity that lies in front of me! If the solemn pledge made today is fulfilled, I assure you that it will revive with redoubled force my intense wish and prayer before God that I should be enabled to live the full span of life doing service of humanity till the last moment. That span according to learned opinion is at least one hundred twenty-five years, some say one hundred thirty-three. The letter of my vow has been fulfilled early beyond expectation, through the great goodwill of all the citizens of Delhi, including the Hindu Mahasabha leaders and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh. The result could not be otherwise when I find that thousands of refugees and others have been fasting since yesterday. Signed assurances of heart friendship have been pouring in upon me from thousands. Telegraphic blessings have come from all over the world. Can there be a better sign of God's hand in this act of mine. But beyond the letter of fulfilment of my solemn vow lies its spirit without which the letter killeth. The spirit of the vow is sincere friendship between the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Union and a similar friendship in Pakistan. If the first is assured, the second must follow, as sure as day follows night. If there is darkness in the Union, it would be folly to expect light in Pakistan. But if the night in the Union is dispelled

beyond the shadow of a doubt, it cannot be otherwise in Pakistan, nor are signs wanting in that direction. Numerous messages have come from Pakistan, not one of dissent. May God, who is Truth, guide us as He has visibly guided us during all these six days.

Harijan, 25-1-1948

HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT*

NEW DELHI

January 29, 1948

Though split into two, India having attained political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e., as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. The struggle for the ascendancy of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the A.I.C.C. resolves to disband the existing Congress organization and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh under the following rules with power to alter them as occasion may demand.

Every *panchayat* of five adult men or women being villagers or village-minded shall form a unit.

* This constitution was drafted by Gandhiji for the Congress on the eve of his assassination. His intention was to show how the Congress which was till now mainly concerned with achieving political independence might convert itself into an association for the Service of the People (Lok Sevak Sangh), and work for the establishment of a non-violent society.

Two such contiguous *panchayats* shall form a working party under a leader elected from among themselves. When there are one hundred such *panchayats*, the fifty first grade leaders shall elect from among themselves a second grade leader and so on, the first grade leaders meanwhile working under the second grade leader. Parallel groups of two hundred *panchayats* shall continue to be formed till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of *panchayats* electing a second grade leader after the manner of the first. All second grade leaders shall serve jointly for the whole of India and severally for their respective areas. The second grade leader may elect, whenever they deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who will, during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups.

(As the final formation of provinces or districts is still in state of flux, no attempt has been made to divide this group of servants into provincial or District Councils, and jurisdiction over the whole of India has been vested in the group or groups that may have been formed at any time. It should be noted that this body of servants derive their authority or power from service ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India).

1. Every worker shall be a habitual wearer of khadi made from self-spun yarn or certified by the A.I.S.A. and must be a teetotaller. If a Hindu, he must have abjured untouchability in any shape or form in his own person or in his family and must be a believer in the ideal of intercommunal unity, equal respect and regard for all religions and equality of opportunity and status for all irrespective of race, creed or sex.

2. He shall come in personal contact with every villager

within his jurisdiction.

3. He shall enrol and train workers from amongst the villagers and keep a register of all these.

4. He shall keep a record of his work from day to day.

5. He shall organize the villages so as to make them self-contained and self-supporting through their agriculture and handicrafts.

6. He shall educate the village folk in sanitation and hygiene and take all measures for prevention of ill-health and disease among them.

7. He shall organize the education of the village folk from birth to death along the lines of *Nai Talim*, in accordance with the policy laid down by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

8. He shall see that those whose names are missing on the statutory voters rolls are duly entered therein.

9. He shall encourage those who have not yet acquired the legal qualification, to acquire it for getting the right of franchise.

10. For the above purposes and others to be added from time to time, he shall train and fit himself in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sangh for the due performance of duty.

The Sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous

bodies :

1. A.I.S.A. (All-India Spinners Association)
2. A.I.V.I.A. (All-India Village Industries Association)
3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh (Society for Basic Education)
4. Harijan Sevak Sangh (Society for service of "untouchables")
5. Goseva Sangh (Society for Cow-protection and Improvement)

FINANCE

The Sangh shall raise finances for the fulfilment of its mission, from among the villagers and others, special stress being laid on collection of the poor man's pice.

Harijan, 15-2-1948

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GLOSSARY

abhyasa : repetition, practice, study

adharma : opposite of dharma

advaitist : a believer in non-duality or monism

ananda : joy

anekantvadi : a believer in the doctrine that reality is manifold, a sceptic

ashram : a retreat or place for community

atman : spirit, soul

avatara : incarnation

bhajan : hymn, devotional song

bhakta : devotee

brahmachari : celibate

brahmacharya : celibacy, code of conduct involving strict observance of chastity and continence in pursuit of learning, philosophy of God

Brahman : God, Supreme Being

Brahmavidya : Science of the Brahman

charkha : spinning-wheel

chit : knowledge, consciousness

colcha : coolie, wage-earner, used contemptuously

Daridranarayan : god of the poor

darshan : sight of a venerated deity or person

dukha : pain

fakir : recluse

fatwa : fiat, decree

gayatri : an invocation to Sun god

gopi : milk-maid

grihastha : householder

guru : teacher, religious preceptor

himsa : violence

khadi, khaddar : hand-spun and hand-woven cloth

mahatma : great soul, title given to Gandhiji

mantras : a sacred formula, a sacred incantation

maulvi : Muslim priest

maya : illusion, in Hindu philosophy *maya* is the divine power which has created the cosmos

moksha, mukti : salvation, freedom from birth and death

muni : sage

Nai Talim : literally "new education", name given to basic or craft education

nam : name

neti, neti : not this, not this

nirvana : state of salvation, i.e., of absolute bliss and calm according to the Buddhist thought

nishkama karma : action without desire for the fruits of it

panchayat : the five, the communal tribune of "council of five"

pinjrapole : institution for sheltering crippled and aged animals including cows

Purna Swaraj : complete independence

Ramanama : name of Rama—incarnation of God in Hindu religion, recitation of God's name

Ramarajya : literally, kingdom of Rama, an ideal system of government

rishi : seer

rupa : form

sadagraha : clinging to truth

samadhista : one established in perfect tranquility of mind

sanatana : ancient, eternal

sanatanist, sanatani : a follower of the orthodox Hindu religion

sandhya : morning and evening prayer

sannyasa : renunciation

sannyasi : one who renounces the world

sat, satya : truth

sat-chit-ananda : Being-Awareness-Bliss

satyagraha : literally holding on to truth ; truth force or soul-force

satyagrahi : a follower of satyagraha

shastri : one versed in Hindu scriptures

sthitaprajna : a man of steady mind

swadeshi : indigenous

swaraj : self-rule

syadvadi : believer in syadvada

takli : spindle-like spinning instrument

tapas, tapasya : austerity, penance or asceticism

tilak : a mark made on the forehead with sandal wood paste

vaids : practioners of ayurveda system of indigenous medicine

vairagya : aversion to world, passionlessness

vaishnava : votary of the cult of Vishnu

varanashroma : duty enjoined by caste rules

vinashaya cha dushkritam : for the destruction of the evil-doers

yoga : Hindu system of contemplation for effecting union of the human soul with the Supreme Being

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